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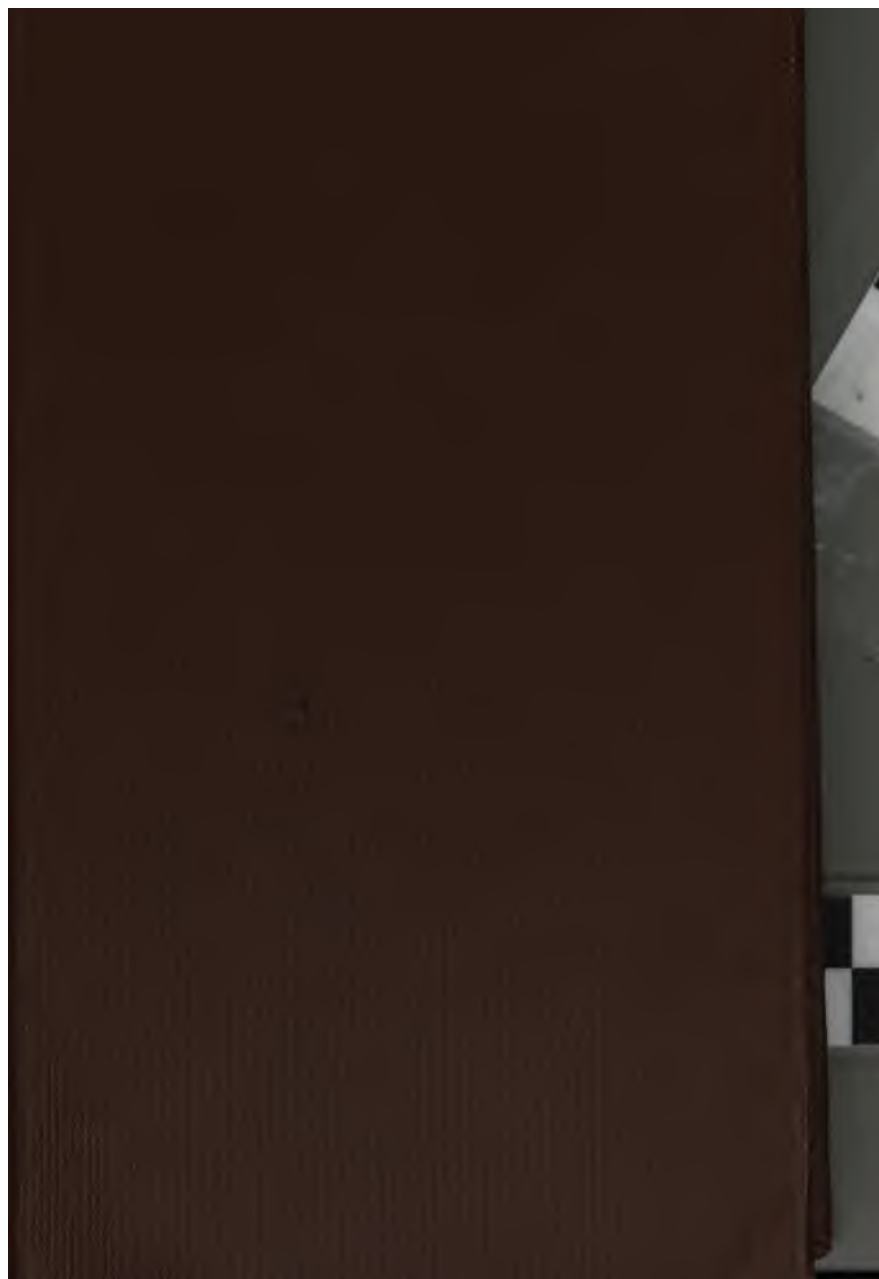
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PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION;

OR,

CONSIDERATIONS ON THE COURSE OF LIFE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

OF *Alphidore Adamant*
M^{ME} NECKER, DE SAUSSURE.
" "

VOL. III.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE LIFE OF WOMAN.

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

IF I succeed in accomplishing the plan I have proposed to myself, the picture of the course of woman's life presented in the following pages will form both a complete work in itself, and an appropriate conclusion to the preceding volumes.

It is desirable to state at the outset what our ideas are with respect to the destination and faculties of woman, and the obstacles she encounters as she advances towards perfection; as well as to declare our opinion on various points, the discussion of which hereafter would only impede our progress. The preliminary chapter will therefore be devoted to the consideration of the present condition of women in society, of the obligations imposed on them by education, and of the much higher qualities with which we think they ought to be imbued.

In the first book the education of girls between the ages of ten and fifteen will be considered.

Here, in all that relates to morality, the principles of the Gospel will be a sufficient guide; but in the intellectual part of education—so often a mere mechanical process—there is abundant room for new suggestions.

The second book will be devoted to the season of youth, and the entrance on womanhood. During the first of these periods instruction, especially religious instruction, will be the object of our attention. But with the termination of youth what may be called *premeditated* education also terminates. At a later period that accidental and irregular developement arising from the course of life not only modifies the effect of any previous education, but often brings to light its defects.

In the last book, which will treat of maturity and old age, we shall have no more facts to relate, but an important moral lesson to inculcate. During the long period of mature age, when, though the privileges of youth have passed away, the faculties still retain their wonted vigour, woman receives, even in this world, the due recompence for the use she has made of her earlier years. On the one hand, ennui, discouragement, and useless regrets,—on the other, a happy and useful career, lie before her.

Another prospect opens before old age. The faculties, gradually weakened, have fewer opportunities of being exercised, but the education of the soul still goes on. God at first educates us by what He gives us, and afterwards by what He takes away. A work, which is every day becoming more internal, is continually going on. But this is a subject too profound, too interesting—I had almost said, too personal—to be minutely dwelt on by one who has reached this extreme point. Old age reserves her secrets to herself; and were it not from a wish to present to our readers some useful reflections, we should shrink from lifting the veil which conceals her feelings.

In order to contract a subject so extensive, as well as to avoid any very glaring inconsistencies, we shall address our remarks only to women of the middle and higher classes. Amongst them we generally find a desire to improve education; and the good which may here be effected will descend by the force of example on those of humbler rank. But even with this limitation, it is not easy to make our remarks applicable to all. So much difference of opinion and character exists between women of different countries, that we cannot address either

the same advice, or the same warnings, indiscriminately to an Englishwoman, a Frenchwoman, or a German. We must sound the depths of the female heart in order to find their common points of resemblance, and to point out their common faults ; and even then, can hardly avoid giving offence to all, unless we content ourselves with the most general and commonplace axioms of morality.

But however delicate the task may be, I am unwilling to give it up. What art might not be able to accomplish, piety and humility will render more easy. It is to women themselves that I would henceforward address myself. Firmly persuaded that their happiness, even in this world, depends entirely on their being true Christians, I have endeavoured to prove this by following the course of their life. I cannot flatter myself that I have entirely succeeded in my object ; but it seemed to me that a work was wanted in which the two important subjects of religion and human destiny should be presented in one view. In most religious books the peculiar impressions of women, their natural, and we may say inevitable, feelings have been little considered, and no detailed advice has been given them ; whilst in the greater number

of treatises on morality, religion is almost left out of the question; and, even when its influence is acknowledged, is not made the soul of our existence, at once the actuating principle, and the end of all our actions. But without this there is no true religion.

Can I venture myself to enter more at large on this holy subject? Is there not some danger of profaning religion by associating it with a multitude of earthly objects? I think not. On the contrary, it seems to me that every thought, every interest in life, requires to be hallowed by piety. No doubt the most precious aid is that which, weaning our souls from this world, raises them up to God; but we need other aid also, to enable us to apply the great truths of religion to the concerns of this life. The dew which descends from heaven may seem to lose something of its purity when it comes in contact with the earth; but the earth, moistened by its fertilising drops, becomes clothed with verdure and beauty.



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PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION.

PRELIMINARY CHAPTER.

SECTION I.

Present Condition of Women in Society.

CHRISTIANITY, by extending the sentiments of humanity and justice, first rescued women from their state of degradation. The progress they have since made in freedom, in knowledge, and in social influence, cannot be denied; but, with regard to this last point, a great change has taken place in our own time. Women have acquired more liberty and more knowledge; but their social influence has diminished.

Nor should we, in my opinion, regret for them the loss of a species of power, which could be regarded only as an usurpation — a dominion acquired by allurements, and maintained by artifice; and which, by robbing men of their dignity, and women of their modesty, was equally injurious to the characters of both.

But there is, nevertheless, a happy influence, which women are intended to exercise. There are qualities which would often remain dormant in a nation, were it not for the interest taken by women in their developement. If the endowments which have been bestowed in an especial manner upon them, were taken away from the common stock, the patrimony of the human race would be grievously impoverished.

But it seems to us that the standard of morality amongst women of all classes might be raised infinitely higher. Their influence — the loss of which, with all its abuses, may in some respects be regretted — would then become truly beneficial. In proportion as public interests have encroached on those of private life, women have become, in a moral point of view, more isolated; and yet their more peculiar qualities are, perhaps, of all others what are most needed in the present age.

Women are naturally religious. They hear the voice of God in their hearts; they acknowledge its gentle, yet powerful, accents in the gospel. Often wounded in their affections, frequently endowed with an imagination not easily contented with the realities of this life, every thing contributes to make them look forward to that better world, where their wishes will be satisfied, and their troubles calmed.

And thus it is that devotional feelings, which lie dormant in the breast of man, are continually awakened and developed by the influence of women. Men often seem to possess a rational, moral, enlightened sense of religion; they are actuated by the powerful motives presented in the gospel; but does it not appear as if women were better acquainted with the secret—the charm—of a spontaneous, internal, religion; a religion in which faith and love are their own reward, and offer a pure and disinterested worship?

So many other feelings also would be chilled if deprived of female influence, that in many respects this influence, as exercised by a virtuous woman, may be said to resemble, in an imperfect degree, that of Christianity itself. Its principle, no doubt, is less sublime, less powerful as a regenerating agent; but still there is a certain degree of analogy in some of its effects. For instance, is there not some resemblance between the spirit of Christianity and that innate spirit of charity displayed by woman? that pity, so keenly and even painfully felt, which urges her always to fly to the relief of distress? The impulse is irresistible; former dislikes are effaced; offences and faults forgotten; nothing is thought of but the present suffering.

Some particular qualities too, which have

perhaps been more fully developed in women, owing to their state of dependence, are not the less necessary to the whole human race. Such, for instance, is that disposition, which, under the name of humility, is so often treated with contempt. Yet as relates to this world, what is humility but a simple conviction that we possess no innate superiority, that we may be excelled either in knowledge or virtue, and that we should be ready to allow that others may have reason on their side? Such, too, is the feeling of gratitude so little experienced by men, whose pride seems offended at the idea of being under obligation to a benefactor: and such are all those truly noble qualities, by which woman is enabled to support with propriety, with that true dignity which springs from the soul, those various relations of inferiority to which every human being is at times called on to submit.

Hitherto we have been speaking only of that salutary influence which is exercised, almost unknown to themselves, by happily gifted women. But what would this influence become, if, by an enlightened and religious education, they had acquired both an earnest wish to contribute to the general good, and the means of accomplishing this object? And of how much importance is it that they should receive such an education! How much power has

been entrusted to them by nature ! How many different periods of life are, almost inevitably, subjected to their empire ! Infancy, with its weakness and ignorance ; youth, with its impetuous passions ; and old age, loaded with infirmities which *they* alone have the power of alleviating.

One reason, perhaps, of the great severity with which woman has sometimes been judged, is the high degree of perfection of which she is supposed to be susceptible. It would seem as if her image, clothed with grace and dignity, were constantly presenting itself to the mind of man ; in youth captivating and deluding him, and in the end inspiring him with a distaste for every thing that differs from the perfect model, which seemed destined to charm him.

And it must be acknowledged that this ideal image of woman is indeed beautiful ; that she is, as she exists in a creative imagination, an admirable conception. But why, alas ! is this ideal image so seldom realised ? Why does it present itself to the mind of man only as a delusive dream ; and to that of woman only as an indication to her of those real qualities, of which she must content herself with offering merely the semblance ? Why is it that we frequently see so many of these qualities displaced by failings of an entirely opposite kind ? Does it

not seem as if women were belying their own nature, when consideration for others is superseded by selfishness, candour by artifice, and when they make use of their quick powers of discernment only to establish their own authority?

Yet on the other hand we must acknowledge, how many admirable women may always be found exemplifying most of the features in this ideal image. Some of them are indeed to be met with in almost all women, for even where they appear most completely effaced, unlooked-for circumstances will occasionally bring them to light again. Whilst, therefore, we are compelled to own that perfect frankness is a rare virtue in women, we venture to assert that their feelings are more ardent, more durable, and less liable to be chilled by sophistical reasoning, than those of men. On the other hand, their existence is less simple, and their motives less easily understood; so that, paradoxical as it may sound, they seem to be both more natural and more artificial.

Whence then arises that lamentable alloy by which beings, evidently intended for better things, are so frequently debased? It seems to us that it is attributable in great measure to a cause of very remote date; to that degrading yoke of servitude so long imposed on them by *men*. This cause must indeed originally have

been most powerful ; for though it has been gradually decreasing in strength till it has, at last, almost ceased to exist at all, its effects still remain—the trace of them is deeply impressed on the manners, the opinions, and even the thoughts of women. They have blindly adopted these humiliating maxims which it should have been their object to subvert.

A deep conviction of the prerogatives of the Deity—a persuasion that for women as well as for men the first and great commandment is to love God with all the heart, and soul, and strength, is the ennobling principle which, by obliging them to fulfil the duties imposed by God, and therefore to obey man when this becomes a duty to God, will preserve them from imbibing any thing of a servile spirit. And would it not be a servile spirit which would lead them to direct their mind, their soul, and thoughts, to mortal man, and even from childhood to place their secret hopes on him? Yet this is the unworthy and arbitrary principle by which the education and the conduct of the whole sex have too often been guided.

We are very far from wishing to deny the subordinate condition of women. It is indeed necessary for the maintenance of that bond which is destined to become the foundation of future society. There must be a head of every family, from whose decisions children must be

convinced that there is no appeal; otherwise the hope that the commands of one parent may be revoked by the other, would lead to continual disobedience; and the idea of interminable disputes would be so closely connected with that of marriage, that few sensible men would venture on the step. It is but right that the husband should enjoy the quiet possession of his authority as some compensation for the obligations he has imposed on himself, and for the new duties he is called upon to perform. Had man been content with the exercise of his legitimate rights, no blame would have attached to him; but in this instance, as in so many others, he has been tempted to abuse the power with which he was entrusted.

Even in the present age, when, owing to that spirit of liberty which has been diffused by Christianity, the freedom of woman is so greatly increased, and she has at any rate less to dread from the physical effects of oppression, she still lives in a species of moral subjection. The weak are indeed protected against the strong by equitable laws, and by a more civilised state of manners; the bonds of marriage are drawn closer by the obligations of religion: but still the wife may feel the dread of being forsaken; and at any rate nothing can protect her from that moral desertion, always so painful, and sometimes even fatal. Man still preserves the

feeling of independence; still considers that woman is made for him, and not he for woman; still regards her as his property, and looks upon himself as her natural master. Beholding in her only a future wife, any faculties she may possess which do not bear directly on his interests have no value in his estimation; and yet woman is endowed with many gifts which are entirely unconnected with her condition as a wife.

This condition is indeed natural, but not necessary to her existence; and it should therefore be the object of education to develope in girls such faculties as will afford them the greatest probability of conducting themselves with prudence, virtue, usefulness, and dignity, whatever may be their lot in life. But this has too frequently been frustrated by the selfishness of man. His views, if directed at all to female education, have generally been personal; his object has been to render woman an instrument either for the gratification of his passions, or the advancement of his interests. And though his views are now become more enlarged, though he now hopes to find in woman an instructor for his children, and is therefore anxious for her improvement, yet he has always the same object in view. It would seem as if one half of the human race were deemed unworthy of being improved on their own ac-

count, as if it were entirely forgotten that woman being equally with man a piece of divine workmanship, she should be treated according to her nature, and raised to that degree of moral excellence and happiness of which she is here capable. A part is assigned to her, and she is duly prepared for its performance, but without any reference to the effect on her own character. According to common opinion, her views in life are neither fixed on herself, nor, unhappily, on God.

Nor do we wish that her main object in life should be herself. We desire that she should devote herself to the happiness of others; but we desire that man should do this also. By no other means does it seem to us that human beings can attain any great degree either of happiness or perfection. But when this devotion to others is imposed as a duty by those who reap all the advantage of it—imposed too by those who show no disposition to practise it themselves—we cannot believe that it will be as abiding, or always as sincere, as it ought to be to deserve the exalted name of self-devotion.

In other things, too—in science, morality, social acquirements—every thing has long been presented to woman under a false aspect—every thing so arrayed as to favour partial views. Even religion has been employed as a *means*, instead of being held out as an es-

pecial end. "Of what use," it has been asked, "would the developement of such a faculty be to a woman?" or, in other words, of what use would it be to her husband? But should the utility of any quality as regards a husband, who may possibly never exist, be the only thing considered? Surely it is not right that the numerous class of women, who have nothing to do with the passions or interests of men, should be condemned to waste their lives in idleness, or useless occupations; that those who are destitute of beauty, youth, or any attractive qualities, to whom the happiness of being wives or mothers is denied, should be overlooked, and perhaps despised, and should possess no resources against old age? Is it either moral or charitable to make them feel as if their existence were a failure, as if they were only half-finished beings? Because they are objects of indifference to the other sex, have they lost their right to become complete creatures, to fulfil the intentions of that Creator who has endowed them with reason, and of that Saviour who died for them as well as for men?

As long as man considers only his own advantage in the tendency of the education bestowed on woman, he will be deceived by his own selfish views, and will not obtain even that happiness at which he aims. In vain will he be continually changing his system, and require

from education by turns a mistress, an artist, or a housekeeper; he will never gain a wife, a companion, a being truly formed to be the charm and comfort of his life.

Must we then conclude that happiness is not to be found in the married state? that a woman cannot attach herself with her whole heart and soul to her husband? God forbid! but by resting their hopes on a higher object, their mortal love will become as ardent as any earthly feeling can be—far more so than it is in general. Two beings depending on each other, and urged by the same impulse towards eternity—conscious of mutual imperfections, but each acknowledging their own self-deficiency to be the greatest—will both be led to cultivate in their souls all the germs of immortality, and will trust to futurity for the full accomplishment of their destiny. To beings thus united all the afflictions of this world seem only “for a moment;” while every pleasure, which deserves to be so called, will, they feel, be prolonged throughout all eternity; and that spirit of true Christianity which renders a wife affectionate and submissive, will also support the woman who has remained single, and will never leave her destitute of affections and of comfort.

SECTION II.

On the true Destination of Women.

IN a moral point of view, the general vocation of men and women is the same: both are required to adore their Creator, and to do good according to their ability; both are required to obey the dictates of justice and of truth, and to practise every other duty which is imposed on them as human beings. But peculiar duties are also assigned to each; and those which devolve on woman are either entirely individual, or comprised within a narrow circle. Her affections have thus become concentrated; and her duties, from being so clearly defined, seem the more stringent.

In the department which has fallen to her lot, woman has been subjected to an imperious necessity; but we always find that moral beings submit quietly to such obligations as are imposed by the nature of things. In this instance the case is one of urgent necessity. Children must be brought up; aged parents must be taken care of; the household affairs must be superintended. Every employment which is necessary, and not already appropriated, has devolved upon woman; and even when allowed the assistance of others, she is considered responsible for their conduct, and

expected to guide and watch over them. Yet whatever may be the restraints of such a condition, it is not without its compensations. The influence thus acquired by women is almost unbounded; and when exercised for the general good, must be productive of heartfelt satisfaction.

What then is the particular part which women are called upon to perform in this world? We answer, to render private life as perfect as is consistent with the limits imposed upon it by the divine law. This applies to every condition. Women, whether rich or poor, married or single, must necessarily exercise an important influence on private life: on them the happiness of families must always in great measure depend. In making use of the expression private life, we take it as opposed to public life — to political functions: for we do not at all mean to imply that women should confine their activity within the circle of their family; we believe that their influence is intended to be much more extensively beneficial. But still it is, in all cases, of the same nature. They must always address themselves to individuals; they have no direct relation with the public; and they are unconnected with any particular body of people. It is generally their lot while on earth to be in subjection to some one master, whether that master be a father or a husband.

Such is not only the will of society, but the natural consequence of their own affections.

Yet there is much that is noble in this vocation: to perfect, to animate, to embellish, and sanctify private life, must surely be acknowledged as a great and exalted object. Women seem naturally formed for instructing. Not only is the moral education of children, — those future sovereigns of the earth, — directly under their control, but by the example they afford, by the charm which they spread over the destiny of every period of life, the means of amelioration are constantly in their power. It is under the domestic roof that those opinions and those manners are acquired, by which existing institutions will be either sustained or overturned. The part assigned to woman in the vicissitudes of destiny, however obscure, is far from being unimportant.

That woman, therefore, who exercises the most beneficial influence within the sphere allotted to her, will best fulfil her destination. Hence it naturally follows, that the married woman — she who as a wife, a mother, and the mistress of a family, exerts the most widely extended influence — will obtain the greatest degree of consideration, and will be viewed as a type of the whole sex. Yet even in this condition she is in a state of dependence; in all her occupations she must submit to the authority

of a master who regulates and directs her actions. It would seem, therefore, as if the unmarried woman might enjoy more liberty, though within a more contracted circle; yet she also is in many respects under restraint.

Perhaps in some countries this restraint is carried too far. There can be little doubt that, in the course of time, the pious zeal with which they seek to do good, the modesty and continually increasing knowledge with which they fulfil this duty, must enlarge the narrow limits within which women are at present obliged to confine their exertions. But they will never throw off that degree of restraint which is imposed by a sense of propriety. The daughter, growing up under the guidance of a mother who is bound to obedience, naturally conforms to the model which is constantly before her eyes; and acquires that spirit of docility and deference, that pliability of disposition, which will always lead her to shrink from the disapprobation of the world, unless supported against that disapprobation by the dictates of her own conscience.

And it is right that it should be so. If a woman were too confident, too independent of opinion, her best intentions would be frustrated. Even her own sex would be opposed to her. Their tact is too delicate for them not to perceive that, as *they* might advance towards

independence, *men* would advance towards indifference, and though still attaching themselves to individuals, would, on finding their protection no longer required, imbibe strong prejudices against the sex in general.

Living in such a state of avowed or implied subjection, it is impossible that women should not be greatly influenced by circumstances in forming their opinions. Hence it is that we generally find them steering a sort of middle course between what they themselves consider right, and what they perceive to be the opinion of others; and they hardly ever venture on an independent decision as to what is proper, even in matters relating exclusively to themselves. They are seldom able to enjoy an interval of uninterrupted tranquillity. Those long hours which with men are devoted to study, or to the almost mechanical exercise of their various professions, are scarcely ever allowed to women. Continually occupied by the present and daily interests of individuals, they are at times required to make sudden decisions, and to guard against being themselves led away by emotions which they are yet called upon to excuse and understand. How much calmness and presence of mind are necessary to enable them to preserve their minds in a state of equilibrium, and to raise themselves above present considerations, without depriving them of their due im-

portance. And in the numerous perplexities of so many opposing obligations, how difficult must it be to assign to each duty its proper rank ; to decide whether those which are most important in themselves are also the most necessary ; or whether those which are only secondary should not, on particular occasions, be allowed to take the lead ! We see at once that no general rules can afford much assistance in making such decisions.

It is therefore of the utmost importance that women should possess a quick and correct feeling of what the exigency of the moment requires. No doubt an accurate knowledge of the laws of duty is very desirable for them ; but in order to apply these laws with advantage, some qualities, which seem almost instinctive, are necessary. How then, it may be asked, are these qualities to be communicated ? In reply to this question we would observe, that women are, in this respect, most favourably endowed by their Creator. They are far from being deficient in quick perceptions. What they want are enlarged motives ; they require some other spur than what is afforded by their tastes, their love of pleasure, their vanity, or their capricious affections ; and some other check than what is imposed by the fear of censure. In short they must be freed from the dominion of egotism. And how can we hope

to attain so desirable an object except by the love of God, by that lively faith, that ardent affection, which so thoroughly penetrates the heart as to supply the place of innate qualities, and almost to seem an involuntary taste for what is good? If we desire that woman should possess humility without meanness, pliability of disposition unalloyed by a spirit of cowardly acquiescence, an inexhaustible charity, which, without overlooking present welfare, will especially interest itself in the welfare of the soul, — we must make her a Christian.

Christianity is a religion so perfectly adapted to the whole human race, that we might perhaps appear to depreciate it if we spoke of it as peculiarly suited to women. But we are at any rate quite justified in asserting that women seem particularly formed for Christianity. She who is thoroughly imbued with true Christian principles, and with that universal charity which results from them, is enabled clearly to distinguish her various and complicated duties. She at once perceives what line of conduct ought to be pursued under any particular circumstances; she sees on every occasion what peculiar duties are required from the devoted wife, the tender mother, the compassionate Christian; and she feels that if one of these duties were neglected, or pushed beyond its due limits, some other quality must suffer in

consequence, and her character be marked by inconsistency.

Above all she feels the necessity of sounding her own heart, in order to purify its dispositions. Probing it, even to its inmost recesses, her humility increases in proportion as the idea she forms of her vocation becomes more exalted. Continually comparing herself with a divine model, she soon discovers her own deficiencies in character, in knowledge, and in firmness of purpose. Obeying her husband from feelings of affection, as well as of duty, she submits to him also from a sincere conviction of his superiority; for however she may equal him in purity of intentions, and perhaps even in natural abilities, she at once perceives that a more solid course of instruction, and a more practical acquaintance with human life, have given to his reasoning powers a strength which is wanting in her own; and she is soothed and supported by this conviction. Ardently as she may wish to influence him for his own good, and feeling, perhaps, that she is even more interested for him than he is for himself, she is yet never tempted to consider herself as having attained a higher state of moral advancement. Nor when she is so unhappy as inwardly to differ from him, does she seek to make her own opinions prevail. Deeply impressed with the holiness of their connection, she regards the

slightest shade of difference between husband and wife as the greatest impediment to their mutual amelioration.

In all her domestic arrangements she is animated by the same spirit. She wishes her household to be an example of all that is pure and elevated in human life. She wishes, not only that a part of every day should be appropriated to family worship, but that all the blessings which we receive from God should be consecrated to Him. She promotes happiness in order to inspire gratitude to Heaven. Nor is she content with the performance of what she considers more strictly as duties; she cultivates also a taste for the beautiful. This seems to her a part of her vocation as a woman; and a certain air of elegance and order pervades every thing around her. Every where may be recognised a spirit of minute detail closely associated with thoughts of a more elevated nature. All her physical cares are ennobled by the continual exercise of the faculties of an immortal soul.

But though such may be her wishes, they can never be more than imperfectly accomplished. No one is more aware of this than the truly Christian woman. She finds frequent cause for mortification in the continual disappointment of her aspirations after perfection; and her gentleness and patience are thus put to

the proof. Yet constantly striving after something better, she endeavours to ascertain what is the duty of each passing moment; and, without hoping too much either from herself or others, avoids encountering invincible difficulties. A secret instinct warns her, that by disturbing the inward harmony of those around her, she destroys her best means of leading their souls to God.

If we follow such a woman into any of the various conditions of life in which she may be placed, we shall always find her equal to the duties of her present situation. Whilst under the control of her parents, she is an obedient and devoted daughter; when old enough to marry, though her heart may be filled with the presentiment of this new happiness, yet she cannot conceive of it unaccompanied by an intimate union of affection and principles. As a mother, she will be intelligent, firm, patient; a faithful organ of God's will, and peculiarly fitted for conveying it to young minds. If she be left a widow, the loss of her present happiness will make no change in the object of constant amelioration which she has proposed to herself. Called upon to act as the guardian and instructress of her children, she will strive to acquire that knowledge in which she feels herself deficient; and in this situation, as in every other, she will be occupied with her own education.

And again, if we suppose such a woman to have remained unmarried, an immense field is still open to her; for she has still in view the prospect of doing good to others, and of perfecting in herself all those gifts with which she has been endowed.

SECTION III.

On the peculiar Faculties of Women.

We have already been engaged in describing the destination of women; and we have allowed this subject to precede the consideration of their faculties, because these faculties have had little to do with the determination of their position in the world. Yet a knowledge of them must always be of essential importance. We must make ourselves acquainted with their natural gifts, not only in order to adapt the cultivation of them to the demands of society, but also that the direction given to them may be such as to be most beneficial to themselves.

But is it true that women do possess any faculties of a peculiar nature? Certainly not, in an absolute point of view. The faculties both of the soul and mind are essentially the same in both sexes; the difference consists only in their relative proportions. These differences, however, even with all their variations, are sufficiently regular to be easily distinguished.

But the question will always arise, — and it is one not very easily solved, — how far they are necessary and immutable, and how far they are accidental.

In the first place, we learn from observation, that in certain states of civilisation, these differences are continually becoming more remarkable; and it is natural that it should be so. Women transmit the education they have received to their daughters; and as they frequently become mothers at an age when the greater proportion of men have not yet thought of marriage, their generations succeed each other rapidly. Moreover, the maternal influence is exercised within a confined circle, into which the light of external life scarcely penetrates. Thus the feelings, the common prejudices of women are propagated indefinitely: and as they are impressed with the idea that the distinguishing features of their moral nature are agreeable to men, it has been their object to render these features still more marked. The consequence has been that woman has become so entirely woman, that the rational being — the being of healthy mind and body — has almost disappeared; and has left only a weak and suffering creature, incapable of fulfilling her vocation.

Thanks, however, to the little interest which men now take in the failings of women, this

abuse has almost ceased in some countries. Folly is now correctly appreciated by society, and considered as tiresome as it is pernicious. Yet there is always a secret disposition in women to exaggerate their natural qualities, and to claim a title, not only to such as they possess, but to many in which they are deficient. They wish to be considered both more delicate and more sensitive than they really are, and to obtain in consequence an exemption from many fatiguing duties; little aware what a wretched and contemptible existence they are by this means preparing for themselves.

And hence the danger of cultivating too exclusively particular dispositions, however desirable they may appear. Yet they must be cultivated. The qualities by which women are characterised are pleasing in themselves: they are suited to their vocation, and favourable to the amelioration of the whole human race. But under an exterior completely feminine should be discernible a moral being: a being capable, on all necessary occasions, of energetic action, — capable more especially of habitually displaying that strength of mind united to gentleness of manner, which is described by the expression, "*self-command*."

It is an acknowledged fact, that in every thing requiring powerful and continued mental effort, women are inferior to men; but there

are some privileges which seem to have been granted to them as a sort of compensation, and which, though not without concomitant disadvantages, may be viewed under a favourable aspect.

In the first place, what can be more rapid, more acute, than the perception of woman? Owing perhaps to her delicate organization, she is superior to man in penetration. Her sagacity in this respect is so great, that she habitually exercises it on the most delicate subjects, and delights in seizing on the slightest indications which denote the state of the mind. By an instinct, which seems almost miraculous, she is taught both to discover the sensations of others, and to sympathize in them. Her imagination enables her to enter at once into the feelings even of those who have few points of resemblance with her; she comprehends the infant, not only before it can speak, but almost before it is capable even of thinking; and she quickly detects the secret grief of the unfortunate.

Another marked feature in the character of women is a sort of innate good sense,—a correctness of judgment,—which, as long as they view a subject impartially, enables them to decide at once on the right line of conduct. Without much reflection, and without being led astray by the influence of any contradictory

reasoning, they point out, almost as if by inspiration, what is most urgent and necessary to be done. Is it that they are endowed with a moral instinct, a sort of intuitive perception of what is required by the exigency of the moment? We cannot answer this question; nor can they always allege a motive for their decision. "We ourselves do not know," said one of their own sex, "the reason of our good sense." An expression which marks in a striking manner both in what they excel, and in what they are deficient.

For whilst acknowledging the importance of these advantages, it cannot be denied that these instinctive endowments stand much in need of a counterpoise. It is a great mistake to suppose that different, or even apparently opposite qualities will neutralize each other. Their mutual effects may indeed be counterbalanced; and this is a fortunate circumstance: for though the qualities themselves may remain, we are then enabled to direct them at our pleasure. On this account it was that, when we formerly expressed a wish that the feelings should be more attended to in the education of men, we were convinced that their intellectual faculties would also be gainers by this plan. And on the other hand, when we desire that in the education of women, a habit of reflection—of reasoning—should be encouraged and even insisted on, we

are persuaded that this would not be in the smallest degree injurious to their quick perception and acute discernment. Women will always see rapidly, and often correctly; but still it is surely desirable that before their decisions display themselves in actions, or even in words, they should be confirmed by reflection. One part of their intellect should be accustomed to wait for the other to be exercised also: their sagacity would be strengthened by the constant habit of comparing their first impressions with their later ideas.

What salutary effects might not be expected from the extraordinary quickness of perception with which woman is endowed, if her views were extended beyond the present moment: if her peculiar faculty of penetrating into the minds of others were used, not in order to participate their continual fluctuations, but, by taking advantage of their transient feelings, to promote their ultimate good! It is only by means of elevated, well-digested, and fixed principles, added to her natural gifts, that woman can be raised to that vocation of instructress, for which she seems peculiarly designed.

Amongst the various causes which have served to retard the intellectual progress of women, there is, perhaps, none which has had so powerful an effect as the idea that they

ought to be constantly occupied with their especial destination. It has been imagined, no doubt, that by having their minds continually directed to this object, they would be better prepared for the fulfilment of their duty. But here, we think, has lain the error. Occupied exclusively with individuals, thinking only of persons, they have taken no interest in things; truth, as such, has never engaged their attention. That noble faculty of the mind by which it is enabled to consider impartially both what is, and what ought to be, has so often remained unexercised, and therefore undeveloped in women, that they have not unnaturally been supposed deficient in it altogether.

We are far from denying the inferiority of women; but, in accusing them of incapacity of any kind, we are arguing either from an experience as yet very imperfect, or from an uncertain analogy. The complete intellectual equality of boys and girls, as long as they are educated together, is a fact which has never been sufficiently taken into consideration. During the whole of this time they show the same interest in their various studies, and pursue them with equal success; and it is only when one sex begins to receive a more solid species of instruction than the other that inequality commences.

The relative value and importance of the

different ideas imbibed by men and women during the period between twelve years old and eighteen,—a period, of all others, perhaps the most favourable to intellectual progress,—will not admit of a moment's comparison. What is the case as regards girls? We see all the activity of life transferred to the interests of vanity or pleasure; a system of instruction stimulated only by self-love, a motive alike unfavourable to the developement of the reason and to a taste for knowledge; a perfect indifference as to what they learn, provided they acquire the credit of having learnt it; lessons devoid unlike of consistency and method, which are given and received,—as far, at least, as relates to the more substantial part of instruction,—rather in order to satisfy the conscience than with the expectation of their producing any beneficial results. Surely, whilst such causes exist, we can be at no loss to account for the intellectual weakness of women!

At the same time it cannot be denied that the present age affords some examples of such unexpected success, as might seem to contradict opinions founded apparently on too slight grounds. Even in those branches of knowledge which are generally considered least suited to the taste and talents of women,—such, for instance, as mathematics,—Mrs. Somerville, in *England*, and Mademoiselle Germain, in *France*,

have attained a high degree of superiority ; and we cannot suppose that these remarkable women devoted their childhood to such intellectual exercises as are required from men. Until the instruction bestowed on women shall be as solid and energetic as it has for the last two centuries been frivolous and inconsistent, it will be impossible to arrive at any well-founded decision as to the strength of their faculties.

There is but little chance that such an improvement will speedily take place : too many circumstances are opposed to it. Nor is it our wish that women should receive a very extensive, and, at the same time, profound education. All we desire is, that the instruction given to them should rest on more determined principles ; should be more rational ; better calculated to lead them to reflect. We should like to see their curiosity occasionally excited by more general ideas ; their attention sometimes turned to the arrangements of the moral and physical world, and not always and exclusively bestowed on the interests of society. And we desire this only for the purpose of enabling them better to fulfil their vocation as women ; for we are convinced that to do this well requires the full developement of the human faculties. As long as women are incapable of forming an impartial estimate of things ; as long as they interest themselves only in im-

pressions, — in the emotions they excite or receive, — they will not be what they ought, either as friends, wives, or mothers; nor will they attain any real superiority even in those branches of art or literature in which they might be expected to excel.

We are far from wishing that women should aim at obtaining celebrity; but we are persuaded that by a more rational and more judicious culture of the intellect, — a culture more worthy of an immortal being, — a variety of talents would be brought to light, which they are hardly suspected of possessing; and calm and serious minds would receive that species of developement of which they are at present so unjustly deprived.

No doubt even then a correct estimate of their several advantages would still show an inequality between the two sexes; but this inequality would not be so great as it is now generally imagined. Women would at least be able to understand, and would take an interest in understanding, the ideas of men, which is not the case on the present system. Under the most favourable circumstances, however, men must ever have the advantage over us; — their nature is decidedly superior to ours.

Should we be asked in what this superiority consists, we might not, perhaps, find it very *easy* to point out any one particular quality as

its cause. More addicted to sensual indulgences, and not either more religious, more disinterested, more virtuous, or, perhaps, more spiritual than we are; we yet feel that they are intended to be our masters, and that they are so in virtue of a moral, as well as physical, superiority. We should then regard with gratitude these two divisions of the human race, both so richly endowed, and each finding in what is granted to the other, that comfort and assistance which compensate for their own deficiencies.

When, therefore, two beings, belonging to these different divisions, become for ever united by the sacred bonds of marriage, feeling that they are each, in some respects, excelled by the gifts with which the other is endowed, they admire and esteem each other for these very gifts. Hence arises a reciprocal attachment and regard, which continue to exist, even after a closer intimacy has revealed numerous mutual failings. Were it not for these failings, we might almost hope to obtain from the union of their several qualities a perfect model of human nature. Is it not probable that St. Paul, by those remarkable words, "Neither is the man without the woman, nor the woman without the man, before the Lord*," intended us to

* 1 Corinth. xi. 11.

understand that this model can never be found in one of these divisions considered apart from the other ?

SECTION IV.

Ordinary Defects in Female Education.

It is hardly necessary to state, that in the reproaches we are about to address to mothers in general, we are far from including all. There are many whose example might be taken as a model, and who have already performed, and much better performed, what we recommend. It must also be acknowledged that in many respects mothers are very much improved. They have felt more deeply the importance of their task, and negligence has in many instances been superseded by careful attention. Thirty years ago, the faults of which we complain, were much more striking than they are at present; traces of them, however, still remain.

It is with the tendency of education that we find fault, rather than with its results: women are in general much more estimable, than the plan followed in bringing them up would have entitled us to expect. Their soul betrays its noble origin; the heavenly ray by which it has been penetrated, cannot be entirely obscured; and from prejudices unavoidably planted, un-

looked for fruit is sometimes produced. Feelings, moreover, so delightful and so unselfish are sometimes suddenly developed; as mothers, especially, women become so entirely above all personal considerations, that the egotism they have previously contracted vanishes before this purer and more powerful feeling. But we have no right to claim for any system, whether relating to education, or to any other subject, the credit of such good effects as ensue in spite of that system.

System, however, is perhaps hardly a proper word to be applied to the education generally given by mothers. We perceive in it neither method, nor determined plan, but predominant feelings, like fixed principles, leading always by one road, and seeming to have one object. The predominant feeling in mothers is that of ardent affection; they are no longer themselves under the dominion of that egotism which we deplore; their interest is now transferred to their daughters; but with it is also often transferred an excessive self-love, which is but too easily propagated. That vanity, which in the mother was disinterested, becomes personal in the daughter. In both cases the feeling is equally frivolous; but in the former it is in some degree atoned for, by its being devoted to another, whilst in that of the daughter it is aggravated by its egotism.

But it may be asked, how can such a state of

things be brought about, when both mother and daughter ought to be raised above such follies by religion, and all women are instructed in the precepts of religion. No doubt this is true as far as the *precepts* are concerned; they are certainly always inculcated by education; but it is not so with the *spirit* of religion; and when deficient in this spirit, education loses the only sure foundation for her hopes.

Shall I be understood if I venture to assert that from our too great eagerness to reap the fruits of religion, the root often remains uncultivated? Wishing to make it useful in a worldly point of view, our attention is fixed too exclusively on the effects it may produce. But if we desire to gain from a partially religious education, what is of the greatest real advantage in this world, — a well-regulated and prudent mode of conduct, — we shall either be altogether disappointed in our expectations, or this advantage, should it be obtained, will be the effect of mere human motives, by which neither the heart will be purified, nor any guarantee for the future afforded. And the reason is plain. Recourse has not been had to the genuine spirit of religion; her precepts have been made use of only as the means of attaining another object. But though it is true that religion affords the best means of acquiring every thing truly ex-

cellent and estimable in this world, yet if employed only as a means, it loses its power, and fails in producing the desired results. In fact as soon as it is converted into an instrument, its value becomes only secondary; entirely subordinate to the advantage to be derived from it; and it is laid aside without any difficulty whenever a more efficacious instrument presents itself.

If then the present life be your great object, and you allow it to hold a higher place in your estimation than a heavenly life,—than eternity—religion must lose its efficacy. But if, on the contrary, you regard human life only as the path which is to lead you to an eternal union with God hereafter, then you will indeed render it both wise and good.

The true office of religion on earth is to purify the soul; and that regeneration of the soul, which is effected by the assistance we obtain from God in answer to our prayers, is the only immediate benefit to be expected from it. But from this benefit every other may in time be hoped for. We may here observe that those qualities with which women seem peculiarly gifted,—tenderness of heart, compassion, the love of what is beautiful, a playful, lively imagination, a contented, and even resigned disposition, a sort of instinctive spiritualism, or presentiment of an invisible world,—are ex-

actly the attributes which Christianity has a tendency to develope in the soul; yet such is at the same time its secret virtue, that it will, by the holy serenity of its morality, counteract what might occasionally be the enervating effect of these fascinating gifts.

But how have women been taught to oppose that disposition to be governed by their feelings which is so natural to them? What means have been adopted to give them that power of resistance, that strength of mind, so necessary to insure their safety? *They have been taught to fear the opinion of the world.*

Yet we would not too hastily condemn mothers on this account. In every thing which does not relate immediately to morality, the customs of society have given rise to a code of propriety, the rules of which no woman can infringe with impunity. Young women must therefore be taught to respect the prohibitory laws of opinion; laws, often founded on reason, and frequently pointing out dangers, which innocence might not perceive, or might be tempted to brave. The fear of offending these strict laws, even by such things as may not appear blameable in themselves, is a truly feminine delicacy, and a most desirable safeguard for modesty. But whilst we forbid our daughters to violate the prohibitions of opinion, *let us be careful not to urge upon them the*

love of praise as a motive to virtuous conduct. Every thing really desirable in education may be obtained by means of much higher feelings.

The great evil is, that the very tenderness of mothers leads them to become the slaves of opinion. They consider it absolutely indispensable that the daughter, who is hereafter to be produced in society, should possess elegance and propriety of manners; should be accomplished, and calculated by her agreeable qualities, not only to attract the attention of her future husband, but also to gain the favour of the world in general, so far as to prevent him from being deterred by public opinion from persisting in his choice.

By these twofold views, a woman's whole education is generally influenced.

It may, however, be asked whether such views are not quite natural? No doubt they are so in a worldly point of view; but they are consequently narrow and superficial. We ourselves are anxious to obtain a similar result, and desire that our daughters should hereafter become good and happy wives; but this result must appear only in the distance, indistinctly seen beyond a nearer and more important object. Those mothers who consider marriage as the direct end of all education, and a strict regard to opinion as the means to be employed for

attaining this end, seem to us to condemn their daughters to irremediable mediocrity.

For is it not plain that such views must tend to the almost exclusive cultivation of external qualities? In fact no others can be true and genuine. Outward accomplishments must be known for what they really are; though they may serve to conceal what is within, they cannot conceal themselves. People cannot be deceived as to manners, or as to those talents which are exhibited in society. It is therefore to these that the attention of mothers is particularly directed. Other things may remain in obscurity, but these must really exist. No one ever questions a young woman about her principles, her knowledge, her amiable domestic qualities; all these are taken for granted.

Hence, what should be the great object of intellectual education, — the consistent development of the faculties — is entirely neglected by mothers. They may indeed be aware of the necessity of certain acquirements; but they seem to have a sort of instinctive dread of any great cultivation of the faculties.

There are seasons perhaps when the spirit of investigation, the desire to trace effects to their causes, the demand for exact reasoning, — even imagination and a taste for the beautiful, may occasion some trouble. Yet these are all natural agents in intellectual education; they

are the only principles of life which have a tendency to develop activity. Memory, on the other hand, is an inoffensive servant, well content to have little to do; it is therefore to the memory that we too often address ourselves. But what interest can then be taken in study?

Nor does it afford any interest to girls. Accustomed to bestow all their attention on their personal qualities, to exercise their talents only in discovering by what means they can attract admiration, the only progress they make, is in the developement of a self-interested sagacity; and thus one portion of the understanding is cultivated at the expense of all the rest. To this cause may be attributed the indifference generally displayed by women for general views, for what is real or true, unless connected with something immediately useful; hence also their prepossessions, their narrow pertinacity of opinion, their prejudices of rank, party, or country; their inability to judge of any thing impartially; in short, all their defects, not only as regards their intellectual powers, but with respect to things of still greater importance. ★

We should not, however, be surprised at these results. It has never been the object of female education to form an enlightened mind, an intelligent being: nothing more has been attempted than to supply girls with a complete assortment of all kinds of trifling accomplish-

ments; to bring their minds up to a certain pre-established level. Whilst following such a plan, what right have we to complain of the narrow views taken by women?

Nor is this the only evil; morality itself has been injured by this system. For though woman equals man in her good intentions, and often surpasses him in purity of life; it would seem as if the same dread existed of the higher qualities of the character, and of the higher qualities of the mind; as if it were imagined that the noblest attributes of humanity—a love of truth and justice—a generous frankness of disposition, and strength of mind—might sometimes present an obstacle to that perfect submission which is required from women; yet it does not appear likely that the habitual employment of an address almost amounting to artifice, would dispose her to gentleness and docility; for instead of that opposition founded on real grounds, which seems to be dreaded, she would display a spirit of capricious, thoughtless revolt. The modest and submissive virtues of her sex have not been acquired; and the generous qualities with which she has been endowed by nature have been sacrificed.

Such is the most serious charge we bring against education. The designs formed are for the most part justifiable, but the means used, the motives urged, for their accomplishment,

are not what they should be. If the wishes of the mother be reasonable, she will be aided in their attainment by the good feelings of her child. She will find that by means of sympathy, freedom from selfishness, kindness, and a desire to contribute to the happiness of others, all her daughter's relations with society will be rendered pleasing and easy, and its favour secured; and by the help of that modesty and dignity which are natural to woman, she will have no difficulty in giving her a delicate sense of propriety. By inspiring girls with a taste for the various objects of art and nature, by directing their attention to external things, rather than to themselves and their own success, their power of making themselves agreeable is greatly increased. Why, therefore, should we prefer the employment of self-love, or of that vain egotism which so often stoops to meanness, and is the source of so many evil passions?

We are too apt to forget that such a disposition must in the end affect a woman's entire character, and influence all her opinions and actions. Reversing the proper order of things, her judgments will be all formed on those of others, whilst her feelings will be all for herself. Instead of loving and admiring, her great object will be to be loved and admired. She will care little for the impression others make on

her, but much for the impression she makes on them. The various shades of such a character may change with age, but the original ground will always remain. / Thus in youth her object will be to charm; at a later age to interest, and in advancing years to inspire respect, to be looked up to by others, on account of rank or fortune, or even to inspire them with a sort of deference by a mere solemnity of manner. Can any thing be more pitiful?

A certain degree of self-love is indeed natural: and it is only the excess of it which is superinduced by education, that is blameable. The use made of that vanity which is so easily excited in the breast of woman is unpardonable. It has been so universally encouraged that, under different forms, we meet with it everywhere; but under every form the substance remains the same; the entire interest of life is made to depend on the opinion of others. And surely we cannot be astonished that the effect of this slavery to opinion should be vanity and feebleness of mind; mediocrity both of character and understanding. What right have we to expect any thing else from faculties which have no independent existence, which act only according to the ill-directed or undecided impulse of society?

Nor will such insensibility tend to preserve a *young woman* from the influence of those pas-

sions which are so much dreaded for her sex; on the contrary, the danger seems to us rather increased by it. At first indeed she may perhaps view the feeling she has inspired only as a sort of brilliant success; but no female heart ever becomes so dead as not to be reanimated by the excitement of gratified vanity?

Is there any certain and approved method then by which a woman may be protected from this danger? None that will guard her against passions already excited. By forbidding the use of vanity as a stimulus in education, a sensible mother may perhaps retard its approach, but sooner or later her daughter will be threatened by an attack of this universal malady. It is only by more energetic means, by the unwearied cultivation of the only disposition truly opposed to self-love, humility, that she can be preserved from its infection.

Humility, however, is so closely connected with the very foundations of Christianity, that it can never be produced by any superficial views of religion. In order to acquire a true spirit of humility, we must not only value morality more than any thing else, but we must feel how immeasurably we fall short of moral perfection; we must sound the depths of our hearts, and acknowledge that in comparison with what we want, the good qualities we may possess are as nothing. If the only true model

of perfection be constantly kept in view, animating us with an earnest desire of resembling it, our consciousness of the imperfection which retards our progress will render us truly humble. The higher we exalt our ideas of virtue, the less shall we think of our own merit. Thus it is, that by his very humility, the Christian alone seems to possess true greatness of mind, and to entertain ennobling ideas of the capabilities of human nature. His dignity is that of an immortal being, and abides by him as steadily as his anticipation of a future life.

This happy mixture of humility and dignity is what we would earnestly desire to cultivate in a young woman. Convinced of the imperfection of her nature, and of the alloy even in her purest feelings, she will find her surest safeguard in a spirit of humility. This will either lead her to avoid temptation, or, if the trial be unavoidable, will render it less dangerous. Having a clear idea of the real nature of moral virtue, she will consider the adoration of which she may be the object as a species of profane folly. All extravagant praises will appear to her deficient in truth, and whatever pleasure she may at the moment receive from them, she will soon recur to the conviction she has of her own failings, and thus at any rate preserve her too susceptible heart from being the dupe of the homage paid to her imaginary excellence

And even in married life, when the pleasure of being ardently beloved may be indulged in with more safety, humility will still preserve a wife from many troubles. A truly humble woman will never take advantage of the power with which a temporary infatuation may have invested her. She will consider the homage to which she feels that she has no just right, as merely the effect of error; a sort of delusion, which she can easily pardon, but on the duration of which she never calculates. Being therefore prepared for that change, which to so many wives is a source of bitter regret, far from despairing of happiness, she will see in the cessation of that absurd adoration of which she had been the object, only a return to the natural order of things.

How different is such a disposition from that vanity and romance with which so many young women are imbued! with which, indeed, the whole atmosphere around them is impregnated, and which are also constantly fostered by education. A mother who has not formed to herself an ideal model of truly exalted virtue, is continually pursuing the changeable images presented to her by the multiplying glass of opinion. Hence that eternal vacillation which effectually prevents her daughter—driven continually from solid to frivolous occupations, and

in each exposed to an equal degree of blame — from comprehending what is expected from her, and makes her so little understand her mother, that it is impossible for her feelings of affection towards her to be very warm.

No doubt the mother's object is the good of her child; and in order to obtain it she calls in the aid of religion. But it is a religion altogether worldly; inculcated for purposes which even the child herself must suspect; and so exclusively employed as a check, that its power even in that capacity is destroyed; for religion is, in an especial manner, an actuating principle, and restrains only by exciting. To this cause may be ascribed that incoherent instruction, so totally devoid of all interest, and so soon thrown aside; that withering of the faculties and the character which allows every sentiment, every thing which communicates an impulse to the emotions of the heart, to be concentrated in the feeling of vanity. I would fain hope, indeed, that, even with such a worldly and frivolous education, a young woman seldom arrives at this deplorable state: but it is a small evil to have been placed in the path which leads to it.

SECTION V.

How far is it likely that the Obstacles to the Improvement of Women will be removed?

It would seem that the condition of all others most favourable to rapid intellectual progress is that, in which faculties, naturally good, have not been brought into sufficient exercise. Such is universally the situation of women. In every country and in every condition their instruction has been greatly inferior to that of men, and their opportunities of making use of it much fewer. External circumstances have also contributed to retard their improvement; but these circumstances are so arbitrary, and so closely connected with the organization of society, that we must not hope for an entire and sudden change in them. We shall therefore content ourselves with pointing out such difficulties as do not appear to be insuperable.

The most striking obstacle to the intellectual developement of women is, the shortness of the period allowed for their education. If girls are to be considered ready for entering on the duties of married life at seventeen or eighteen, any thoroughly grounded instruction is out of the question. During the few short years in which they are capable of application, what a

variety of things have to be learnt! Not only must all the stages of that elementary instruction which is common to both sexes, and rendered necessary by the customs of all civilized countries, have been passed through, but their attention must also have been directed to many other occupations. Besides an acquaintance with the various degrees of duty imposed by the different relations of social life, a young woman who is properly qualified to perform her part as a wife, should possess skill in such employments as are peculiar to her sex, a knowledge of the cares required for domestic economy, and the habit of attending to them. In addition to these indispensable acquirements, the cultivation of some of the pleasing arts, and a knowledge of one or two foreign languages, may also be desirable. And if those vigorous exercises of the understanding which alone can yield full employment to the intellectual powers, should also be made an object, how and where could they be brought into the life of a young woman? The only rational years, those between sixteen and eighteen, — that interval of which the value as regards intellectual progress is so great, — when the early mists of infancy being dispelled, and her health in some degree established, a young woman might devote herself to her favourite pursuits, cultivate those particular talents which seem most congenial to

her taste, and display something of originality, — this precious interval is pre-occupied by an entirely different object. Her mind is so completely engrossed by the desire of obtaining success in society, by alternate hopes or fears as to marrying, by the feeling that her fate is about to be decided, — that there is no room for other ideas. Time is wanting for the intellectual developement of women; but a much more mortifying circumstance is, that inclination is also generally wanting.

And how should this be otherwise as long as they find that instruction is of so little use to them? A young man knows that in pursuing his vocation in life, whatever it may be, knowledge will always be not only useful, but necessary to his success; he has therefore a motive for exerting himself to acquire it; but this is not the case with women. Success in society is the only success of which she can form any idea; and she feels that to obtain this, no science will be half so advantageous as a becoming dress, a pleasing manner, or a lively sally.

Such important obstacles as want of time, and want of inclination, are to be surmounted only at some cost, and the price paid has sometimes been too high. For instance, time has been procured at the expense of health, by the *sacrifice of that bodily exercise so necessary to*

its preservation. Against this notorious abuse the physician, the parent, and the writer on education, ought each to raise their voice. Is it not plain that by thus enfeebling those who are hereafter to become mothers, we are preparing the future degeneracy of the human race?

Without here noticing another very serious omission, that of daily family worship, I would remark, that those various domestic occupations by the performance of which women acquire so much good sense, have been too generally laid aside. Yet it was this early introduction to real life which so often rendered a young woman superior in understanding to a young man, though he was not only her equal in age, but had enjoyed many more advantages of education. Much of that happy leisure, too, in which the mind was both resting, and expanding itself, has been absorbed. An accumulation of lessons has destroyed all gaiety, all bursts of imagination, all free exercise of the will, every possibility of reflecting even on the subjects of the lessons themselves.

Thus sometimes passive, inert beings are formed, totally devoid of all mental activity, even as regards worldly matters. At other times the craving after some more energetic impulse is so great, that the restraint of education is succeeded by an excessive and ill-

regulated vivacity. In every way, that gentle satisfaction, which arises from a state of tranquil excitement, has been allowed to disappear; and the connection of the most pleasing feelings with their spontaneous and natural expression, has also been lost.

These causes will easily account for the prejudices which have so long been entertained against a woman's possessing either great talents, or much learning: prejudices, which the present increasing esteem for knowledge has perhaps in some degree diminished, but which still exist to a greater extent than is generally imagined. It would certainly be unjust to accuse instruction of the great disadvantage which has arisen from an *ill-proportioned* education; but it cannot be denied, that the present customs of society, render it impossible for a young woman to receive an enlightened and solid course of instruction, except at the expense of such qualities and habits as are still more necessary.

Fully resolved, therefore, never to offer any advice as to the details of education which might tempt mothers to sacrifice what constitutes in our opinion its life and energy, we shall be obliged to retrench many of those acquirements, generally esteemed so necessary. But though we may thus release the memory from some of its efforts, it will be our object to

obtain these efforts from the mind itself, and from the faculty of attention.

But may we not hope that in time the obstacles, which are presented by the present state of opinion and manners, to the complete development of the intellectual powers of woman, will be surmounted? Is it not probable that the ordinary time of marriage may be deferred to a later period; and that it will at last be discovered that our literature, owing to its southern origin, has placed the spring time both of the year and of life at a much earlier season than is adapted to our climate? Will it not also be perceived, that if a due regard be paid to the welfare of future generations, the important task of watching over the early dispositions of children should not be entrusted to women at the very time when their vanity is most easily excited, and their love of pleasure the most ardent? As they approach the age of two or three and twenty, many of their illusions are dispelled; and it is not till then that the idea of marriage will appear to them as serious and imposing as it ought to do. If the determination of parents on this subject were steadily declared; if young women were not introduced so early into society, and the era of marriage were in consequence proportionally deferred, the result would be highly advantageous. The acquisition of a few tranquil years,

which might be devoted to study, to reflection, to the attainment of a more correct appreciation of human life, would enlarge the minds of women, and bestow a solidity on their character, the benefit of which would be felt by future generations. And how many resources would be provided, by this introductory cultivation of the intellect, for those who may be destined to single life !

If the duties of married life were neither undertaken so soon, nor looked forward to with so much certainty, time would be gained ; and the value of the interval thus acquired, as regards intellectual cultivation, would be inestimable. And if one obstacle — want of time — were thus removed, the second — want of inclination — would soon give way before the conviction, which would be felt by every young woman, of the necessity of using her own endeavours to increase her strength of mind.

We may remark, too, that with regard to the latter point, many circumstances seem at the present moment particularly favourable. In proportion as the restrictions on the employment of knowledge are taken off, its real usefulness becomes more apparent. Custom now imposes fewer restraints on women. It may, perhaps, result from an increased indifference in the other sex, but the fact is, that *women* are now allowed to act much

more independently than heretofore ; men are no longer shocked when they see them travel alone, live alone, and even manage their own affairs. They are permitted to acquire knowledge, and even to gain an acquaintance with various sciences, provided they do not expect to be admired for these attainments. Being therefore less remarked, they are less exposed either to praise or blame ; and it is their own fault if they do not take advantage of this state of obscurity.

We may here notice another important effect of the greater independence now enjoyed by women, an effect, too, which seems calculated to have an increasing influence on their destiny. In conformity to that law of our nature, by which, if the powers of the mind be arrested in one direction, they turn into another, women, now that they are less under the dominion of flattering illusions, have been inspired with a desire of becoming useful. Their activity has taken a new direction ; they have established schools, and various other religious and charitable institutions, and have drawn up, and enforced, rules for their government. Their deliberations and committees have so far resembled those of men, as to give rise to the unjust idea, that they were desirous of entering on a career little suited to their capacity.

Their exertions have not, however, been alto-

gether agreeable to the other sex. As philanthropists, men are indeed, in some measure, obliged to approve of the results, but as individuals they are not equally well pleased. It seems to them an additional step towards independence; and whether from mortified self-love, jealousy of their authority, or a vague fear of the indiscriminate zeal of women, — the form of these associations is too much in opposition to their feelings not to have been the subject of frequent ridicule.

It must be confessed, too, that women have occasionally laid themselves open to some ridicule on this subject. By an air of pretension and an assumed importance, they have betrayed the vanity which prompted their zeal; and their eagerness to do good has too much resembled a fondness for whatever is fashionable. But we must not look only at the dark side of the picture. Their motives are generally good, and the effects decidedly so; and what is more likely to purify the intentions than being engaged in a noble and useful undertaking? We allow, indeed, that our esteem ought to be granted only to good motives, and that on them the usefulness of the undertaking must often depend; but in our opinion such works as are capable in themselves of exciting generous feelings will, in the end, render these feelings predominant, even though the original inten-

tions may not have been entirely free alloy. And when we consider, on the other hand, the multitude of wretched beings living under the burthen of a labour to which their strength is unequal; and, on the other hand, the numerous females of a higher rank, who are almost equally oppressed by the load of idleness, it is impossible not to wish that the superfluous leisure of the one class should be made available, in order to enable the other to labour more freely. Both would be gainers, not only as regards happiness, but intelligence also. By no motive would women be so much engaged to the acquisition of knowledge, as by the prospect of making it useful.

Various circumstances may, no doubt, prevent a woman from taking an active part in useful associations; but there can be no objection to her promoting the same end in some other way; and if every individual were to improve herself in the moral improvement of the ignorant and the ignorant, it would be highly beneficial to education in every station of life.

By presenting to their daughters, as a model, the hope of becoming hereafter able to instruct poor children, men would gain the use of a powerful instrument which can hardly be brought into action by any other means. Women seem peculiarly fitted for teaching; and were it not for

injurious effect of raising expectations which may not be realised, nothing would be so favourable to the formation of their mind and character as training them up to be mothers. Under the exciting influence of this hope, morality, intelligence, feeling, every faculty would be developed. But who would venture to encounter the risk of producing those bitter feelings of distress which arise from the idea of a failure of destination; the same species of grief which is often felt so keenly by married women who have not been blessed with children? The plan of proposing the vocation of teaching to girls as a motive for learning, without any direct reference to the maternal character, seems a fortunate idea; and cannot be turned to better account, than by leading them to interest themselves in the education of the children of the poor.

Nothing, perhaps, is more favourable to the acquisition of really solid instruction, than the prospect of having at some future time to teach. We are thus obliged to attend to the principles of what we learn; a circumstance often entirely neglected in the education of women. As girls advance in their course of study, various exercises, bearing on the art of teaching, might be allotted to them: such as selecting proper elementary works; or, if necessary, translating such works from foreign languages. When

still older, women, if mistresses of their own time, would seem to be peculiarly calculated for rendering instruction popular, and giving it that lively form which lays hold on the imagination of the common people, and of children. Many, amongst whom may be especially mentioned the names of Edgeworth, Marcet, and Martineau, have already distinguished themselves in this way; to them we owe the happy idea of bringing science into action, and showing by striking examples the danger of ignorance and prejudices.

To women who have proceeded thus far, study will often be productive of the greatest delight; they will be eagerly desirous of advancing farther, and should they be prevented by circumstances from making their particular acquirements useful to others, they will still derive pleasure from the search after truth, on its own account. They are not incapable of feeling that pure and disinterested zeal for the advancement of science, by which so many men have distinguished themselves; and should they, with the intention of hereafter devoting themselves to education, apply to the study of the natural sciences, hitherto so little cultivated by their sex, they would find an ample field for the exercise of their sagacity. Many sciences, the principles of which are easily mastered, require to be enriched with more

facts: and that talent for observation which so many women possess in a high degree, might thus be turned to good account. They would then soon perceive the vast difference between those pretended resources, which are made use of only to pass away time, and those by which an important object is promoted. Experience would soon teach them that it is not only in the arts, and higher branches of literature, that success may be obtained by women, but that there are other studies of a more tranquil nature, which would procure for them more durable and less dangerous pleasures. At least, it will be our endeavour hereafter to show that this is the case.

After all, however, the number of women who will arrive at any high degree of intellectual cultivation will always be very small; nor does it follow that they will be either happier or more estimable than others. No doubt as long as so much importance is attached to knowledge, superior intellectual development must give additional weight to their example, and increase their influence. But it is the multitude of unknown, excellent women, — those whose whole heart is fixed on fulfilling their duty, — who will always have the power of doing the most good.

Men do good according to their notions of what is good; the good they effect is real, and

necessary, as far as it goes, but it is not sufficient. They organize and instruct; the edifice both of society and science is constructed by them; they constitute what may be called the body of civilization; but they do not possess the vital spirit which should animate it. Women, on the contrary, have to do with the life, the soul, the affections. The developement of these is what they understand; and hence it is, that they have, in the end, so much more influence than men over what are called the *manners*; that mass of feelings associated with habits, which, when the torrent of the passions has passed away, always returns to its regular course.

If therefore they will be content to respect the natural limits of their power; if alike free from ambition and from vain pretension, they will rekindle the celestial flame of the love of God, and thus render a service more valuable than any other to mankind, women may obtain from our unchivalric age, more happiness, a destiny less brilliant, but more truly noble and great than any which awaited them in those renowned ages when they were surrounded with a more dazzling lustre.

BOOK II

PERIOD BETWEEN TEN AND SEVENTEEN

CHAPTER I

MORAL EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

IN the preceding chapters of this work we were engaged in considering the development of morality in children under ten years of age without any regard to the influence of religion. In bestowing on them a religious education, we could not doubt that we were giving them the best possible preparation for afterwards pursuing their several vocations. It inspires them with love for that God who is revealed to us both by his works and in his word; to encourage them to lay open their wishes to Him in prayer; to teach them to regard Jesus Christ as their Saviour, their support, their mediator; such, in our opinion, are the great objects which a mother should ever keep in view. And when this early instruction has been strengthened, enlarged, and varied in its application, by daily family worship, offered up with sincere devotional feeling, children will, in proportion as they acquire a better know-

ledge of their various duties, be more disposed to perform them. With respect to such duties as seem to belong more peculiarly to women, these should, in reading the New Testament with girls, be dwelt upon with especial attention.

Will it be said that in order to point out the particular cares which are required by the organization and destiny of women, we should recur to the earliest period of childhood? It seems to us that this cannot be necessary, inasmuch as we are addressing ourselves to mothers, and no instruction is needed to induce them to take every requisite care at this tender age. In fact they are perhaps only too much disposed to consider their infant daughters as privileged beings; and, impressed by the double weakness of their age and their sex, unintentionally to exempt them from many of those obligations which are equally imposed on the whole human race. An exemption fatal in its consequences, and in our opinion founded on erroneous principles; for there is no moral law, however strict, which a woman, as such, is not the more bound to obey.

We shall therefore resume the subject of education with girls of ten years old, an age still sufficiently connected with infancy; and should any of our remarks appear better suited to an earlier period, mothers will have no

difficulty in referring them to their appropriate age. The atmosphere with which women are surrounded even from the cradle is so injurious, the advice given to them during their whole life is so often addressed to their most dangerous inclinations, and tends so much to strengthen these inclinations, that mothers ought to be at least as much occupied in studying the faults they will have to struggle with, as the qualities they must endeavour to cultivate, in the character of their daughters.

For this purpose the plan which we have alluded to as followed in the former part of this work, will, to a certain degree, be advantageous in real life. When sisters are brought up with their brothers, they must of course submit to the same duties; justice and truth are the only means employed in governing them; there is more firmness and less flattery in this common education; the promises and threatenings of opinion, to which boys are generally very indifferent, are less brought into action. The motives proposed alike to all are founded on virtue, reason, and true morality.

As the comparative weakness of girls is scarcely manifested before ten years old, why should they be emancipated from the laws of natural equality? Why should they be taught to expect such particular consideration from men? By encouraging such expectations we

are only preparing for them severe disappointments. Endeavour to inspire your sons with respect for the dignity and delicacy of women; urge upon them the duty of watching tenderly over the happiness of beings who are condemned to a state of dependence; but do not let such exhortations be given in the presence of your daughters; they may easily be led to depend too much on the support thus given to them. If men are not to be allowed to claim any privileges on account of their superior strength, neither must women be allowed to do so, on account of the need they have for protection.

Presuming too much on that interest which they believe themselves created to inspire, girls often require a preference to be given to them on every occasion without any regard to justice. It seems to them more pleasing and more flattering to be exempted from particular obligations, than to submit to them; and they soon learn to regard this indulgence as their lawful privilege. A privilege only humiliating to a woman when she obtains it, for this general permission to do whatever she pleases, implies a secret contempt for her character.

The effect of such indulgence is particularly injurious to sincerity. Partial in their views, and pre-occupied with the eager interests of amusement or vanity, girls are seldom entirely *open* and true. This so frequently proceeds

from their little winning attempts to please, that we are too often led to overlook a slight degree of artifice, even when they are past the age of infancy. Provided they abstain from palpable lies, trifling deviations from truth are disregarded, and instead of being viewed with displeasure, seem almost to be expected.

Yet so necessary is truth to women, that even their best qualities without it are of little value. The consequences which result from an appearance of falsehood in the other sex are well known; but the evils arising from it to women have never perhaps been sufficiently considered. A man has always the power of re-establishing his character in public opinion. His actions may, independently of his words, prove the rectitude of his feelings; and at any rate he is always master at home; his domestic rights remain uninjured.

A woman, on the contrary, if it be once known that she is deficient in truth, has no resource. Having, by an improper use of language, injured or lost her only means of persuasion, nothing can preserve her from falling into contempt or nonentity. When she is no longer to be believed, no one will take the trouble to listen to her.

And thus it often happens that an excess of weakness in the mother tends to deprive her daughter of what may be called moral exist-

ence; that is to say, of the confidence of those around her. Deficient both in justice and truth, she can hardly be called a human creature: no one can depend on her;—no one rests any hopes on her; the words of which she makes use have no meaning: they are mere external forms, devoid of all life. Is it not true that to far too many women this description would apply?

To imagine that this indifference for the great foundations of morality, this common agreement to pardon in women every fault except the only one which is deemed entirely inexcusable, will make them more carefully avoid this particular crime, would be a great error. But even if our only anxiety were to secure what is exclusively termed *female virtue*, no better safeguard could be provided than a sacred regard to truth, and the certain embarrassment and confusion to which a person, habitually sincere, would be exposed by the slightest attempt at dissimulation.

Watch, then, most carefully, mothers, over the probity and simplicity of heart of your daughters; search deeply into their motives, and condemn every thing which assumes the appearance of artifice; and, above all, never make use of artifice yourselves; never let the fear of inflicting temporary pain, or of being less fondly loved, prevent you from represent-

ing things exactly as they are, and let all the relations between yourselves and your daughters be governed by the most perfect rectitude. By these means alone can mutual esteem and mutual confidence be engendered; by these means alone can you bestow on them a real moral existence, and prepare them to enjoy hereafter in their families, and in society, a consideration totally independent of their personal charms;—charms which, deprived of this support, would serve only to ornament an unreal shadow.

We are far from wishing to undervalue the power of a graceful manner; but that gracefulness which springs from within is alone capable of producing any certain effect. What is it that delights us more than anything else in girls? Is it not that transparency and candour which form the peculiar and fascinating attributes of youth and innocence? Something of this charm still clings to the woman who is perfectly sincere; and she who has lost it is obliged, when desirous of pleasing, to put on its semblance.

Obedience is essentially necessary in education; and being, at the same time, not only the first duty which is understood by the child, but that which leads to every other, there can be, on this subject, no difference in our treatment of the two sexes. Yet docility—that

inward disposition which induces a willing obedience, — should, perhaps, be more particularly cultivated in girls. Boys, when they are delivered over to public education, are governed more by general rules, and less by the will of individuals; but women are often required to bear, perhaps for their whole life, the yoke of personal obedience. Such being their lot, it is well that they should be accustomed to it, and that they should learn to yield without even an internal struggle. A ready and sincere docility would be equally favourable to their cheerfulness, their health, and their temper.

A daughter who loves and respects her mother will often obey her with eagerness and joy merely from the delight she has in pleasing her. This is no doubt a great advantage, and will form a happy introduction to the acquisition of higher ideas of duty. But this alone will not be sufficient; these higher ideas of duty still require to be cultivated. A constant habit of docility can only arise from a conviction of the obligation we are here under of obeying a sacred authority. Mothers are often too anxious to obtain every thing by means of affection; but this sentiment, however unchangeable in itself, is capricious in its demonstrations; neither always making use of the same expressions, nor always producing the *same effect*. Nor must we trust to reason as

an infallible resource; the means of persuading are not always in our power. Besides, how would a young wife, who will yield only to what she calls the force of reason, perform her duty? Undoubtedly she would be justified in refusing to comply with an immoral command; but, in every other case, she has solemnly pledged herself to obey.

We have no hesitation, therefore, in exhorting mothers fearlessly to exercise that sacred authority with which they have been entrusted by God. Even supposing that the accomplishment of their wishes could be obtained in any other way, it would still be of the utmost importance to accustom their daughters to submission. We may here repeat, what we stated on a former occasion, that a long exposition of motives only provokes opposition, and even leads to the idea that it is expected. With respect to girls especially, it is of great consequence to prevent remonstrances, and not to allow a habit of cavilling and contradicting to be formed.

Man is less likely to contract such a habit; he has only to state his determination, and every thing in the family gives way to it: but woman, with whom the final decision on any subject seldom rests, is too apt to prolong indefinitely any frivolous opposition, and by

this means both to annoy her husband and disturb her own peace of mind.

The feeling of a higher duty, the ever-present conviction that in obeying the laws imposed by nature, or by the strict engagement into which she has entered, she is obeying God, these considerations will forbid any attempt at opposition, and will enable a woman to preserve her dignity, even while yielding the most implicit obedience. Whatever may be her vocation on earth, such feelings and such conduct will at once mark her as a being designed for immortality.

By encouraging such sentiments in your daughter, you will at the same time be cultivating various other qualities; you will inspire her with patience, resignation, and all those gentle virtues which every woman is inevitably called upon to exercise. She has to submit not only to the caprices of fortune, but to those of man also. Frustrated attempts and disappointed hopes must always make a part of her destiny; her most praiseworthy intentions are often defeated, her occupations continually interrupted; and she must submit in silence to humiliations, and even to still more bitter grievances. But such trials, when supported with gentleness and patience, will necessarily tend to produce an exalted virtue.

The little vexations experienced in infancy

are as nothing compared with those which occur at a later age, and these are only a salutary preparation for after life. But we do not recommend that such trials should be created for children; let the natural course of life be allowed to flow on, and occasions for the exercise of self-denial will never be wanting. Do not, therefore, in order to preserve your daughter from some temporary distress, conceal from her that there are pleasures which she will be required to forego. Should an agreeable, but at the same time uncertain, project be proposed, let her have the hope of its taking place, but point out to her also the various circumstances which render it doubtful. If you think it right to decline for her an invitation to some party of pleasure, let her hear both of the invitation and of your refusal. By thus showing her that she is treated with confidence, and that you trust to her good sense, you will enable her to bear such trials; and she may, perhaps, in the end, be led to take an interest in the numerous exercises of her patience which will be afforded either by chance or education. By these means a most valuable disposition will be formed, and the pupil will obtain an internal instructor.

Self-command constitutes the happy medium between that passive will which submits quietly to necessity, and *that* active will which executes

its own designs in spite of natural indifference or inconstancy. This active will should be cultivated in girls; for however pliable and docile we may wish them to be, we also wish them to possess decision of character. And whilst we take care not to allow them to acquire an abrupt mode of expression, a dogmatical tone, or a confident manner, we must be equally careful not to render them incapable of forming a resolution. Occasions when it is absolutely necessary to take a decided part must often occur; so many temptations creep on insensibly, and young women are so often led to stand on slippery ground, that nothing perhaps is more to be feared for them than a want of strength and decision of character.

If therefore you observe that your daughter has not energy enough to form a will of her own, that she is governed by indolence even in her amusements, and ready to follow any guide who may be presented to her, endeavour to place her in situations which will oblige her to decide for herself. Force her to be free in spite of herself; follow her at a distance with your eye, but withdraw your guiding hand from her. At such times general precepts may perhaps be of some use, and maternal authority may by degrees be superseded by the authority of principles. The beautiful examples afforded by the *Gospel* may be brought forward with advantage,

and will address themselves to her heart with that gentleness which its weakness demands.

In requiring qualities so opposite in their nature, very nice distinctions become necessary in order to determine the precise point at which one virtue must give place to another. But it is not our intention to enter on these. There can be no difficulty in understanding the spirit of our advice, for it is the spirit of Christianity. Harmonious contrasts constitute the essential character of Christian morality, and raise the woman, who is faithful to her high vocation, as near as possible to perfection.

The great question in education is not so much to teach moral laws, or even to promote in each case their observance, as to form a moral soul, — a moral character. Then it is that we perceive a general impulse, — an internal energy — the same spirit acting in a thousand different ways according to the exigency of the moment. But it is Christianity alone which can accomplish this education of the heart; for though different virtues may be excited by various human motives, no central focus of morality can exist except in religious faith.

CHAPTER II.

MORAL EDUCATION CONTINUED. — CULTIVATION
OF THE DISPOSITIONS PECULIAR TO WOMEN.

WHEN habits of obedience — the peculiar virtue of childhood, — and of truth and justice, which constitute the foundation of all society, — have been once firmly established in the heart, we may then enjoy the pleasure of cultivating in our daughters those faculties with which as women they are especially endowed. So far, indeed, from the exercise of these faculties being any longer attended with danger, it would be a great error to neglect their cultivation; for by so doing, the happiness of the whole human race would be diminished. Women would then be only so many superfluous men — weak and common-place men; their proper station in society would be lost, and what other place could be found for them?

The greater part of those dispositions which are peculiar to women are, as we have before said, connected in some way or other with the sensibility, which is the heritage of their sex, and on this account our first attention should be directed to the consideration of them.

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sufficient to excite innumerable egotistical feelings in the heart.

An anxious desire to be loved, and the hopes and fears to which this desire gives rise, create a connection between devotion to another and devotion to ourselves ; for however natural and even unavoidable such a desire may be, it must be to a certain degree interested. If we seek for an example of the tender affections in their greatest purity, we shall find it in maternal love. Here alone we are presented with a type of that love which is felt by our Heavenly Father for his children. Here alone, where there is no idea of return, do we witness an entire forgetfulness of self. The mother watches by her infant — sees it sleep — hears it breathe — feels that it is happy — and she is content — her heart overflows with happiness. Why is it that no other affection touches us in an equal degree ? Because in every other affection, however ardent, there is always some expectation of return ; and this tincture of personality at once detracts from its purity.

If it be true therefore that selfishness is the root of moral evil, and that there is no vice, no criminal conduct, which may not be traced to an over anxious desire for our own interest, it cannot be doubted that the most strenuous efforts of education should be directed to the *cultivation* of the disposition most opposed to it.

We may be wrong in the supposition, but it does appear to us that in the most civilized countries, and especially amongst those young women whose education has been the most refined, the desire of pleasing and of being loved is much stronger than the disposition to love. And yet for a sensitive being there is no real happiness so great as that of loving; this alone will exist in eternity, and this alone embellishes our present life. A woman endowed with this disposition will indeed always feel a wish to inspire affection; she will feel this to be necessary in order that she herself may love freely, and that the expression of her attachment may not be repelled by coldness; but the true foundation of her happiness consists in her power of loving. The return which she desires may be a necessary condition of this happiness, but does not constitute its pure and elevated source.

We should then be especially careful never to cool the ardour of our daughter's affections. Let her words and actions be subjected to the control of reason, and even her thoughts regulated by the laws of religion; but let her heart be the seat of the tenderest love. A sentimental susceptibility should be carefully repressed; and we must particularly be on our guard against displaying it ourselves, as, even from their earliest childhood, we shall find our

daughters inclined to copy and even to go beyond us in this respect. Concluding that a sentimental feeling must naturally be an exacting one, a girl begins by enacting scenes of quarrelling and reconciliation with her doll ; and has no sooner acquired a friend, than a series of romantic trials and explanations will take place. What a dismal prospect does such a disposition present for her future husband !

Let us therefore provide for our daughters objects of affection by which their kindly dispositions may be more particularly excited. Let us excite their interest for creatures from whom nothing can be expected, and whom they will merely wish to render happy. Let them at first have some pretty animals to feed and take care of ; and afterwards little children to dress and instruct ; by these means the wish to give pleasure, and as they grow older, the feeling of charity, in its most enlarged sense, will be fostered in their hearts. Such dispositions, far from ever rendering them unhappy, will frequently serve to sweeten the bitterness of other feelings.

When the general spirit of education has once been freed from anything like egotism, another of those gifts which seem peculiar to women, may be safely cultivated. I allude to that discrimination, so often boasted of, which enables them to penetrate into the secret re-

cesses of the heart. No one can deny the utility of this faculty; it is indeed almost a necessary instinct for weak beings, with feelings so keen, and rights so little acknowledged. It serves to ward off evil beforehand, and constitutes a sort of advanced guard, discerning afar off every thing which might wound their delicacy. It is by this faculty that women are rendered pleasing in society, or, at all events, are taught to avoid what is disagreeable; and, on this account, the study of physiognomy forms a very useful exercise for children. Tell them that they would have been spared the pain of a reproof if they had remarked the first signs of displeasure which they excited: advise them to observe carefully whether people are really amused by their lively sallies, or really interested by their narratives. How much less wearisomeness would exist in the world were such a plan of education pursued!

It must, however, be acknowledged, that good and evil are here brought into very close contact. The discrimination of which we are speaking is not a virtue; it is a talent, and, like every other talent, it may be abused. It may degenerate into an indiscreet curiosity, — a habit of judging on slight grounds, — an address almost amounting to cunning: in short, such an abuse of this faculty may exist, that a state of moral blindness would have been far

preferable. Yet, after all, every endowment is a blessing from Heaven ; and it must not be forgotten that, in every recommendation, we assume, of course, a Christian education.

Though a taste for what is beautiful is not peculiar to women, it is especially necessary that it should be cultivated. Called upon as they are to embellish all around them, they ought to have an intuitive perception of every thing attractive or agreeable, which can be elicited from any object, situation, or feeling. In this consists the secret of the power they possess of charming, and of the happiness they diffuse. Yet they are supposed to be habitually so much under the influence of vanity and frivolity, that the love of what is beautiful is hardly ever purposely and deliberately cultivated in them. This, however, seems to us the effect of an erroneous impression.

The pleasure of admiring, or, in other words, a taste for the beautiful, is totally distinct from that feeling of vanity which is excited only by the pleasure of being admired. The same confusion of terms, to which we alluded in speaking of sensibility, exists here : the sentiment which a woman wishes to inspire is frequently taken for what she feels herself. Those who are influenced by vanity have more pleasure in being looked at than in looking at others. Even the gay trifles which raise so many eager

desires in their breast would lose all interest for them in solitude; their value consists only in the *éclat* which may be derived from them.

Where this is the case, the feeling of what is beautiful—in itself so pure, so elevated, and so disinterested—is unknown. Were they once to experience it, the chain of their customary ideas would be broken. I may, indeed, go farther, and say that, were this feeling directed only to such objects as are really worthy of admiration,—especially to that love of God which contains within itself the love of all beauty,—there is, perhaps, no actuating principle in human nature which would more completely effect what we desire for women, or would constitute for them so valuable a safeguard. From its warning voice they would learn, even more certainly and more quickly than from their reason, whenever any thing was carried beyond the bounds of moderation; it would excite in them a natural repugnance for every thing untrue, extravagant, or exaggerated, and would teach them to avoid that excess by which even their better qualities may be rendered displeasing.

In fact, though few virtues can be exercised without some energy of character, yet there is almost always a certain point beyond which a woman should not advance. The idea of duty, abstractedly *considered*, is perhaps too absolute

to contain within itself the necessary limitation: economy and exactness might degenerate into avarice or meanness, and prudence become pusillanimity, unless women were guarded against such errors by their sense of propriety. Hence arises their quick perception of any thing ridiculous, or derogatory to that ideal image of grace and dignity which they have formed to themselves.

To this restraining influence, another, still more powerful, is added by this feeling. Constituting as it does the very soul of the fine arts, it seems to diffuse their inspiring charms over the whole of life, and to bestow a harmony on all its parts. Elegance of language, gracefulness of manner, a wish for correct proportions in every thing,—such are some of the gifts with which a taste for the arts, and that perception of what is beautiful from which the arts derive their existence, are accompanied. But we must not hope that such happy effects will be produced by this feeling, unless it be united to solid principles.

In order that its developement may be free from any mixture of vanity, we must take care that the first objects presented to the admiration of girls are selected from the boundless stores of Nature. By pointing out to them the regularity—the symmetry—which is displayed in all her works, let us teach them to regard

order as one of the elements of beauty. By directing their admiring attention to the heavens, to the innumerable stars, shining in all their splendour, yet still under the dominion of order, their ideas of order itself will be exalted and enlarged; and, by the regular appearance and disappearance of the sun at stated hours, by the succession of the seasons, and, consequently, of the harvests, which thus show us that the subsistence of all living things depends on the laws of order, we may explain to them that, as observation of these laws is required for success in the labours of agriculture, so, also, must the same obedience govern the employment of our days and hours. At the same time we may point out to them that this physical order, so necessary to life itself, could not exist without moral order; that whenever the inclinations run into excess, and refuse to submit to any regular laws, misery is the inevitable consequence; that in nations this misery is produced by tumults and wars, in the cottages of the poor by intemperance, and in the families of the more affluent by folly and extravagance. Let us show them that the observance of order is a law universally established by the Creator, and unconsciously obeyed by the stars and the earth, by animals, and even plants; but that man, guided by a

more certain light, has received it directly from Heaven.

In order to explain how these great truths are to be applied to conduct, let us make our children understand that from every human being the fulfilment of certain duties relative to order is required, and that from some of these even a little girl is not exempted. Her care must be extended to every thing which is entrusted to her: she must therefore keep her person, her clothes, her room, and her little articles of furniture, all in order; and she must be taught that these cares, however trifling they may appear, are, in fact, connected with essential duties, and even with the will of God.

But whether inculcating the general duties of human beings, or cultivating in our daughters those faculties which are peculiar to their sex, it is of the utmost consequence that every necessary admonition should be associated in their minds with the positive precepts of Christianity. We would therefore, before quitting the important subject of moral education, exhort all mothers to be careful, whilst they are addressing themselves to the heart, to give intellectual precision to their religious instruction. With regard to this, it seems to us that the mode of teaching best adapted to the latter part of infancy will also constitute the best preparation for the more *methodical* and complete instruction reserved

for the period of youth. A mother who has succeeding in making her daughters acquainted with the Holy Scriptures, who has made them not only understand but delight in them, will have provided in the best possible manner for their spiritual wants at a later though still tender age.

Children early accustomed to join in the family devotions must have acquired a knowledge of a considerable portion of the Bible. But the worship suitable to a whole household must necessarily be confined within limits far too narrow for the developement of more advanced pupils. And as the mother will be led, from the nature of her audience, to recur again and again to those chapters in the Holy Scriptures which are the most fruitful in moral applications, it may happen that the frequent repetition of the same ideas and the same expressions may produce inattention in her hearers. It is therefore extremely desirable that she should enliven and enhance the effect of this reading, by occasionally addressing the imagination, or by requiring some active exercise of the understanding.

If a mother possess the art of describing — painting to the imagination — scenes from the Holy Scriptures, she is indeed endowed with a most precious talent; and children — always seeking eagerly after images, and so apt them-

selves to form ideal representations—will listen to her with the greatest delight. By an account of different countries, of their productions, their climate, and by a minute description of particular localities, a vivid interest will be imparted to her narratives. How striking and how full of life will the figures of our Saviour and the Apostles appear in the evangelical histories when they are pictured under the beautiful sky of Judea! How strongly were the ideas of Jerusalem, of the Mount of Olives, the brook Cedron, the valley of Gethsemane, all impressed on the imagination of De Lamartine from his having, when a child, listened to his mother describing the scenes where events, with which so many feelings are associated, took place! Where is the mother who would not wish to leave with her children such recollections, accompanied by the gratitude which they naturally inspire?

When children have once become interested in the events related in the Bible, a mother will discover innumerable ways of exercising their mental powers, and inspiring them with a wish for further instruction. In the conversation which may take place after the religious exercises of the family, she has an opportunity of showing her own desire of gaining information on any subject to which allusion has been made by the sacred writer. Various points relating to

history, geography, or natural history, may seem to her to require further elucidation; and for this she may engage her children in assisting her to refer to such books as are likely to afford the necessary information; or she may give the books to them and encourage them to search for what they want to know.

When a girl is once convinced that it is her duty to regulate her life by the law of God, she will no doubt eagerly embrace every opportunity of making herself acquainted with this law. The doctrines to be believed, and the precepts relating to morality, will then be made the subject of other exercises. A comparison of various passages in which the same truths are inculcated, and the same duties enforced, will lead to an examination into the nature of each. The different expressions made use of by the sacred writers will suggest innumerable distinctions as to the individual characters of the several authors, and their particular views at different periods. By such methods will that moral discernment, so especially valuable to their sex, be developed in girls. Writing down such reflections as they have either made, or heard on these subjects, would also form a very useful exercise in many respects. But these exercises must not assume the dry, uninviting form of tasks. Rather let them be a sort of general research, carried on by the whole family circle,

and enlivened by the idea of the discoveries to which each may aspire. This should be more particularly the case during the weekdays; but on the Sunday such exercises might be extended much farther, and might furnish subjects for many interesting compositions. This would afford to young minds—so apt to be unhinged by complete idleness—an occupation well suited to the holy appropriation of the day.

The frequent lamentations which we hear in the present age on account of the want of influential religious belief, make it only the more necessary that the study of the Holy Scriptures as a part of education should be rendered much more interesting. We have no hesitation in saying that so long as the perusal of the sacred writers does not produce a soothing and solemn impression on the mind, the spirit of Christianity is unknown. And how much difference do we behold in this respect even amongst those men who would be far from acknowledging themselves to be devoid of religion! To some the Bible is a sealed book, the very language of which, in its spiritual sense, they are unable to comprehend;—an object of indifference, if not of absolute dislike. To others, on the contrary, it is the source of the purest delight; in their eyes the Bible is an inestimable treasure—a support—a succour, which enables them both to live

and die in peace; their only means of attaining a future life, and their only consolation amidst the troubles of this world.

Is it possible for education to inspire a feeling at once so salutary and so productive of happiness? We cannot assert that it has in all cases this power; but we believe, and we have seen striking examples of the fact, that education is at any rate fully able to excite such a feeling in a degree proportioned to the capacity of childhood.

The exercises which we have been recommending are, moreover, beneficial in every way. No kind of instruction is more desirable than that which, at the same time that it is itself closely connected with moral improvement, brings into action a spirit of research, and directs it towards such objects as are worthy of veneration.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE ESSENTIAL QUALITIES OF INTELLECTUAL
EDUCATION.

WE must not be unjust to parents. Their intentions are generally praiseworthy; they are, for the most part, anxious to procure for their daughters such instruction in every branch of knowledge as appears to them consistent with their situation in life. Many prejudices of long standing are now weakened. It is acknowledged that women may possess cultivated minds without being of course pedantic; that such women may fulfil the duties of domestic life as well as the less enlightened of their sex, and that they are not necessarily strangers to the graces with which many ignorant women are entirely unacquainted. In short, as far as teaching is concerned, education has, in the present age, done all that was in her power. But the great question is, whether her efforts have always been well directed. If we are to judge by the results, this may fairly be doubted.

We are far from intending to assert that those women who are said to be well instructed

are deficient in intelligence. In some respects, they often possess a high degree of mental developement. But it may, we think, be doubted whether the lessons on which so much labour was bestowed during their childhood have contributed much to this developement.

Nor is it denied that many women possess much real knowledge; but what use do they make of it? They seldom venture on any display of it in society, for this would be set down as pedantry; and it is to be feared that they do not, in solitude, derive much pleasure from the exercise of their acquirements. Do they, however, employ them in assisting a husband in the duties of his vocation; in supplying the place of governesses or masters to their children; or in the better regulation of their household affairs? It would be unjust to say that this never happens, but we may with truth assert that it is not a frequent occurrence.

How, then, as regards intelligent women, is this to be accounted for? By the fact, that their minds have not been interested in what they have learnt: all their intellectual powers have been turned in a different direction, and none left to be applied to study.

Some acquirements have indeed been made, for which they have to thank a merely passive comprehension and memory; but no taste has

been inspired for the subjects of instruction, no real desire experienced for enlarging their minds, nor any pleasure derived from the exercise of their judgment. Their studies have been entirely devoid of vitality, and resemble a collection of plucked flowers, whose buds wither away without expanding.

What is the result of this total want of all real intellectual effort during childhood? A listlessness and indolence which pervade the whole of after-life. We often see these well-taught women, satiated with what they have already learnt, instead of feeling any desire to make fresh acquirements, spending their whole time in reading novels and working embroidery. As mothers, they are soon weary, even of listening to those lessons which they allow to be given by others; and yet, as their minds, however inactive, have received a sort of refined cultivation, they feel a certain degree of contempt for those who supply their place in teaching their daughters. Masters appear to them tiresome and pedantic, and governesses vulgar: the contempt in which they hold these assistants is constantly perceptible, and is soon discovered not only by the teachers themselves, but by their pupils also. Hence arises a general discouragement, and a sort of tacit agreement, of which all avail themselves, to take as little trouble as may be.

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Yet when a mother shrinks from every thing like fatigue, how can she do without such assistants? Nothing can so completely disqualify us for the task of instruction as inertness of mind. If we rely on the faculty of memory alone for the power of teaching, it is of little avail. Methods are constantly changing; even the same elementary books are seldom used for two successive generations; and with every book explanations are necessary, illustrations required, and that flexibility of mind which enables us to vary at pleasure the form of our lessons is always wanted. Knowledge must possess a degree of pliability in order to be available: even in the employment of the interrogative system, a teacher who is not thoroughly imbued with the spirit and principles of the subject of instruction will never obtain satisfactory answers to her questions, and will often find herself as much at a loss as her pupil.

Should it, then, be our object to bestow on girls instruction both more profound and more extended? This seems hardly desirable, inasmuch as any advantage which might be derived from such a plan would be obtained at too great a cost. We have already pointed out the difficulties arising from the shortness of the period devoted to education; and in now claiming a portion of each day for the attainment of

objects which appear to us too much neglected, it may seem that we are only increasing these difficulties. We will, however, mention some of these objects. They are, in the first place, daily family worship, not occupying a great length of time, but offered conscientiously and from the heart; in the next place, bodily exercises, longer in duration and more invigorating in their nature, than what are generally practised; and lastly, about one hour of entire liberty, under no superintendence but that of conscience.

We must not forget that these various allotments of time are each, in fact, intervals of relaxation for the mental faculties; and the same remark will apply to those occupations which are requisite in order to prepare a woman for entering on her peculiar vocation. The great variety of duties which, even from a very early age, she must be accustomed to fulfil, renders a certain amount of sacrifice on the part of instruction necessary. But the question from which branch of instruction this sacrifice should be required, is not very easily answered.

We seem here to have only a choice of difficulties. Should we endeavour, as frequently has been done, to give a kind of universality to our instruction? It will then, of course, be superficial and commonplace. Every mind

will seem to have been formed in the same mould; time will have been consumed at the expense of the health and gaiety of our pupil; and her happiness and charms will have been destroyed, without her having attained excellence in any one acquirement. Should we, on the contrary, give up particular studies in order that others may be pursued with more energy? The very studies which we have most carefully cultivated may, if a young woman should marry, prove totally useless to her, and, in some cases, may even be troublesome to a husband; how then must we decide between the disadvantages attending a general, but necessarily vague and inefficient, and those of a more specific, but, it may be, ill-chosen, instruction? Is there no middle course which may be pursued? We think this question may be satisfactorily answered.

It seems to us more desirable for women to possess a taste for study, and a facility in acquiring knowledge, than any great amount of learning. It is no disadvantage to them that their desire to be instructed should be greater than their actual acquirements. Let it be our endeavour to give them a habit of application, a wish to gain new ideas, a taste for overcoming difficulties, and then let us be content, without their possessing much scientific knowledge.

It will easily be seen that what we have

already assigned as the true end of instruction — the developement of all the faculties — appears to us an object of especial importance in the education of women.

A young man called upon, as he often is, to fulfil the duties of a predetermined destination, may occasionally, without disadvantage, receive a course of instruction to which an especial direction has been given. But with regard to a young woman, it is impossible to foresee any thing with certainty. The future is doubly unknown to her. Should she marry, her husband may follow any one of a hundred different occupations, or may pursue a variety in succession ; she must therefore be ready for every thing ; prepared to fulfil the duties of any situation to which she may be called, usefully both to herself and others. But this universal aptitude cannot have been acquired unless there has been a general developement of the intellectual faculties.

And how is this to be accomplished ? Such a developement requires a degree of zeal on the part of the pupil which we scarcely know how to excite. Here lies the difficulty. Could we be satisfied with regular lessons given by a master at a fixed hour, the task of education would be far less difficult. The influence however, of moral motives, on a young girl who has not been incited by any others, is

very great. The sacred duty of satisfying her parents, and the pleasure she will take in her studies, if she have been judiciously treated with regard to them, will be sufficient to insure her progress for a length of time. At a somewhat later period it may be desirable to explain to her the principles on which her whole education is founded.

“Hitherto,” may her parents say, “you have been treated with that consideration which your tender age demanded. The trifling exercises of attention which have been required from you, were not calculated to enlarge your ideas in any great degree. Hence it is, that such elementary instruction as you have received, serving only to furnish instruments for the acquisition of true knowledge, has been justly termed *instrumental instruction*. The doors of knowledge have been opened to you, but you have not yet advanced beyond the threshold; an additional degree of strength is required to enable you to penetrate farther.

“At the same time, this preparatory instruction, taken in connection with what we consider as of much higher importance, — the education of the heart, — has already been highly beneficial to you. Your various moral faculties, feeble as they are, have all been exercised at the same time. You have been

led to adore God, to love your neighbour, to admire the beauty which exists in the arts and in nature, and to exercise both your memory and your judgment. No single faculty has been left in the background; but all now require strengthening.

“ This will, therefore, for some time to come, be our chief object; and yet even in this respect the instruction you will receive can hardly be called more than preparatory. You will, it is true, acquire more knowledge: but neither our ability, nor your age, will allow of this being complete or profound. It cannot be denied that the after education, which we bestow upon ourselves when the moral and physical powers are more fully developed, is the only one which is really productive of final good; the only one which leaves any lasting traces. Our task, therefore, at present must be to inspire you with the desire, and furnish you with the means, of future improvement.

“ For this purpose your lessons will consist rather of such exercises as are calculated to strengthen the intellect, than of what is generally termed instruction. Perhaps you may not always understand the connection between a particular study and your future destination; but your destination, taken in its true sense, is to be useful, and our task is to prepare you for being so. You will be called upon to do good

in a variety of ways, — good to the souls and minds of those to whom your assistance will be also physically necessary. It is, therefore, of essential importance that your own mind should be enlarged, that all your faculties should be exercised, and rendered capable of exerting themselves. Your studies will, we trust, be often productive of pleasure to you, but will also occasionally give you some trouble. If you do not acquire betimes a habit of earnest application, you will fall under the dominion of that indolence which is so common to your sex; you will never rise above mediocrity, and your most salutary influence will be destroyed.”

Should parents succeed in making a permanent impression on their daughters by such language, an incalculable advantage would be the result. Is it not an advantage to hold out the prospect of rational employment for the period of youth,—that period when the inclinations of girls so often lead them to seek after frivolous amusements? Is it not, too, an advantage that this employment should become almost obligatory, by the conviction they have acquired of the insufficiency of what they have already learnt, and of a further advance being rendered still more necessary by the progress they have already made? Again, the complete

exclusion of vanity as an actuating motive, is no trifling consideration. In fact, that general developement of the faculties which is our object, cannot be made the subject of display. Our pupil will often be inferior to her companions in knowledge or accomplishments; and no opportunity will be afforded of proving her real superiority. No one will discover that she possesses intellectual powers capable of being turned to account in any way that may be desirable, and she herself will be the last to suspect it.

But leaving out of the question such pleasures as arise from gratified vanity, we cannot fail to perceive that the most trifling mental advance, the slightest voluntary exertion of those faculties which we are anxious to cultivate in girls, is far more valuable than any display of learning. What pleasure a mother must have in observing her daughter listening attentively to an instructive conversation, and silently endeavouring to profit by it! And should she venture occasionally to ask for some further explanation, would any man be so churlish as to refuse it to her? That impatience of a woman's questions, which is often displayed when her only object is to attract attention, or to gain an opportunity of uttering a bon-mot or a lively sally, is never shown when they

evidently arise from a genuine desire for information. Could women feel this desire, unmixed with any personal considerations, men would have much more pleasure than is generally imagined in favouring the improvement of a truly unassuming mind.

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE STUDIES CONNECTED WITH THE EXERCISE
OF THE REASONING POWERS.

ONE of the greatest difficulties in the education of girls is to make a judicious selection of occupations for them. So many objects appear desirable, that we can hardly refuse our approbation to the pains taken for acquiring them; and we are apt to forget how many others of far more importance are neglected. Hence the great inconsistency so often displayed in education; hence the many omissions of what essentially concerns both moral and physical well-being. Nor will this serious evil ever be remedied, unless parents form to themselves some previous idea, both of the objects to which most importance should be attached, and of the proportion of time which should be severally allotted to these objects for the few short years during which their daughters yet remain under their authority.

In making such an estimate, many things must no doubt be arbitrarily determined, and different views will of course be taken by different parents; so that the plan we shall

propose will have little chance of being generally adopted. But though, from the apparently imperious nature of particular circumstances, minute directions can seldom be followed, yet on the other hand those which are vague and general are scarcely listened to, and make but a transient impression on the mind. As it is, however, our wish to excite the attention of parents in a more particular manner to this subject, we shall use such explicitness as may engage them at least to reflect upon it.

The exactness with which we would regulate both time and occupations may, indeed, appear to some too strict and dogmatical. But in laying down any rules, the exceptions are not to form a part of the rules. The essential point is to show the advantages of order, and surely the care of exempting their daughters from any thing like too severe a restraint in their education may safely be trusted to mothers.

We shall therefore, taking the general condition of women such as it is in the present state of society, pass over the difficulties which may present themselves to the execution of our plan. It is impossible to appreciate correctly the infinite varieties of circumstances; and the most simple course is to point out, in the first place, what would be the best plan, were a choice of means in our power. At a more advanced period we shall endeavour to show how those

resources, which seem least within the reach of parents, may be most advantageously supplied.

We shall, therefore, suppose the day to consist of fourteen hours. The question, then, is the due apportionment of this diurnal period to the occupations of a girl for five years to come. It must be owned that this is an imaginary day; these hours may, if it be thought desirable, serve to represent fractions of time, which may be equally applied to weeks, months, or years. In the application of them circumstances will, no doubt, be continually varying; seasons will continually occur when girls will follow with redoubled energy some one study; the opportunity of employing particular masters and the temporarily increased zeal of the pupil will be motives sufficiently powerful to authorize a change in the arrangements; nor can it be denied that it is at such periods that the greatest progress is generally made.

At the same time we would advise that none of the branches of study which we are about to recommend should at any time be allowed to remain long in the back ground. Yet in proposing this simultaneous cultivation of them, it is not without regret that, with respect to girls, we turn aside from that path which we tracked out for boys.

Why then, it may be asked, do you leave this track? Are not the laws which regulate the

developement of the mind alike for both sexes? And since you have determined that the study of one particular branch of instruction for a length of time gives a far more salutary impulse to the intellectual powers than what is afforded by any desultory studies, why should not this plan be pursued with girls? Have you not yourself complained of the want of interest and consistency which are the natural consequences of a mode of teaching where the various impressions received neutralise each other?

We acknowledge that we did make this complaint; and it is our earnest wish to remedy this evil by following some other plan; but not by having recourse to that of an exclusive study.

In fact, as regards female education, no one study, however well chosen, or however well calculated for promoting the developement of the various faculties, would bring them all into action. Without the powerful stimulants and the severe discipline of a public school, this study, though exclusive, would be productive of little advantage. Its difficulties would be constantly eluded; lessons would be given and received with indolence; much time would be lost, and whilst a profound ignorance would remain on many points, the mind would have been very little excited. And how could the deficiencies which must be left by such a mode of teaching be afterwards supplied? We could not, for girls,

have recourse to universities,—to a course of academical instruction. In this case, as in so many others, women must submit to the yoke imposed on them by necessity; and we are obliged to acknowledge that their education is almost always a sort of compromise between what is best in an abstract point of view, and what is best as regards their particular condition.

It is therefore by weighing the effects of different studies against each other that we must endeavour to bestow a mental consistency of character on girls; and by no method shall we be so likely to obtain this result as by a simultaneous cultivation of the various branches of instruction. The daily portion of time allotted to each study will no doubt appear very short, but we must remember that the same plan of instruction will be continued for five years.

We acknowledge that such a mode of teaching, though possessing certain advantages, is not what we should in the first instance have chosen for women. Every one knows that they are liable to temporary fits of excessive energy, during which they bestow a great amount of time on objects of which they afterwards lose sight altogether; whilst it is no less evident that their true vocation rather demands from them the performance of a number of daily duties, none of which are of a nature to require much time. This conjoint diversity and uniformity of

their daily occupations must, if long continued, tend to the formation of salutary habits; and as each of the studies we recommend might, by the constant and inexhaustible variety of objects which it affords, furnish occupation for the whole of life, an additional source of happiness would be opened to our pupils in their being able to look forward to the future continuation of these pursuits.

It is, therefore, by means of a different arrangement of their time that we hope to establish habits of method and perseverance. Instead of dividing it into certain broad portions, we would have it separated into narrow strips, indefinitely prolonged.

The plan generally pursued appears to us injudicious. A course of history or literature is perhaps given for a few years, and the pupil is then considered sufficiently instructed on these subjects, and neither she nor her parents bestow upon them any farther attention. Thus women make some digressions into the region of learning, but all their knowledge remains unconnected and incoherent, and is soon completely forgotten.

As it appears to us hardly possible to allow more than four hours a day for purely intellectual instruction, during the period between ten and fifteen, we would devote at least one of these hours to such studies as are more particu-

larly adapted to the cultivation of a faculty which is at once the most necessary and in general the least developed in women,—that of the reasoning powers. Almost every other endowment of the mind has received its appropriate culture, but so close is the mutual connexion of our moral powers, that, from the neglect of this one faculty, all have suffered.

Yet mothers have been continually admonished on this subject, and the necessity of cultivating the reason in the education of girls has been repeatedly urged upon them. In fact it is a truth universally acknowledged. Why then has it been so little attended to? Because mothers, whilst recommending to their daughters the use of their reasoning faculties, have themselves mentally referred to something entirely different.

The object they had in view was, we allow, sufficiently important, and might seem to them even more so than the developement of an intellectual faculty. Their aim was to persuade their daughters to conduct themselves with propriety, and to prove to them in every possible way that this was no less their interest than their duty. Reasonings and exhortations, very likely excellent in themselves, were presented to them; but it may be doubted whether their judgment was sufficiently exercised to enable them to corroborate that of others.

We are apt to forget that unless the mind be in a state of tranquillity, and able to examine impartially the different sides of a question, there can be no real exercise of the reasoning faculties. But from this very circumstance it follows that all subjects relating to morality must be excluded from this exercise; for who can be impartial in a question of right and wrong? How can the judgment remain cool when the feelings are all excited? Does not every good heart at once, as by a natural instinct, reject the idea of vice, and embrace that of virtue? You may perchance be able to encourage generous emotions; but should any indirect reproach be concealed under your words,—should you endeavour to repress or even to forestal any evil inclinations, your pupil will be hurt and irritated, and in no condition for exercising her reason. Her conscience will have been roused, and its louder tones will completely drown your voice.

At the same time such exhortations are not altogether without their advantages; we are enabled by their means to multiply the applications of our moral rules, and to enlarge in many ways the ideas relating to delicacy. By explaining to our daughter those laws which regulate society, we in some measure anticipate the effects of experience. But how much time must elapse before she can fully understand the complicated organization of this society!

How many doubts will be raised in her mind, how many things be to her incomprehensible! No just conclusions can be drawn, except from certain and well-defined facts. For the true exercise of the reasoning powers, distinct objects, totally independent of the conventional forms of society, or of any examples of good or evil conduct, — objects, in short, unconnected with the affections of the heart, or the susceptibilities of self-love, — are absolutely required.

We are, therefore, convinced that in order to enable this faculty to attain any degree of correctness, girls must for a length of time be occupied with objects having no relation whatever to their interests. By directing their attention to the study of inanimate nature, and of the immutable laws of God as displayed in the material world, we extend their thoughts beyond the sphere of our daily discussions and exhortations, and exercise their minds without disturbing their tranquillity. And this suspension of the ordinary course of their ideas is not only favourable to the developement of the intellect, but is in many other respects particularly beneficial to women.

We are here speaking of the higher classes, and of those evils — too often overlooked — to which they are peculiarly exposed. Nothing seems to us more to be deplored than that excessive degree of excitability with which so

many women are endowed. By this morbid sensitiveness they are kept in a constant state of agitation, which their usual trifling occupations, far from interrupting, rather tend to increase. When in distress they have no resources from which a tranquillizing effect can be expected. Whilst men and women, in the lower ranks of life, find at times a relief from their troubles in the avocations of their business, and the urgent necessity of daily labour, females in a higher station, who have little or nothing to do, are insensibly harassed and worn out by a continual succession of painful feelings. Their existence becomes a state of feverish anxiety; and this existence is too often communicated from mother to daughter, and may sometimes be recognized even in the sons.

In asserting that nothing tends more to mitigate the pain — not perhaps of great misfortunes, but certainly of those disappointments, vexations, and deprivations with which life abounds — than the soothing interest inspired by the study of nature, I can speak from personal experience. This taste for observation accompanies us every where, and is often exercised almost unconsciously, and at times when no idea of study enters the mind. There are, no doubt, resources of a more holy and elevated nature; but is it not much easier to have recourse to these when we have already obtained

a temporary relief from our own thoughts, and from the importunity of earthly cares?

We would therefore devote one hour in the day to the study of the exact, or natural sciences. The several portions of this hour, be it understood, may be distributed in any way that is thought best amongst the arrangements of the day; or, should they be found occurring too often, it may be considered more advisable to give longer lessons every two or three days. A quarter of an hour is, however, the shortest time that I have assigned to any particular lesson; though Miss Edgeworth, whose authority on this subject I have formerly cited, gave lessons of only five minutes in length with extraordinary success. From this minute division of time, she obtained the advantage not only of preventing her pupils from being ever wearied, but of exercising their presence of mind, and giving them the habit of immediately collecting their ideas and fixing their attention.

In recommending the very early cultivation of a taste for studying the beauties of nature, we were anxious to form that spirit of observation which, though not itself an exercise of the reasoning powers, leads to this exercise. Observation collects facts; but our object is to teach our pupils to draw from these facts correct conclusions. And how can this object be in any way so well attained as by making use

if the most perfect example of the art of exact reasoning? in short, by the study of mathematics? Such a study may, indeed, seem to require almost too earnest an application of the mind; and we would therefore allow to it a very small proportion of time, not exceeding a quarter of an hour every day; and we should, besides, prepare the way for this study by substituting for those easy lessons in calculation, which our pupil had formerly been performing almost mechanically, a graduated course of rational arithmetic, which, by the employment of the interrogative system, would soon become an intellectual exercise.

However formidable the name of Algebra may sound, we believe that, if the experiment were made, intelligent girls would derive much pleasure from a slight acquaintance with this science. The curiosity of beginners is excited by the solution of easy algebraical problems, illustrated by examples taken from familiar objects. Nor is there any study better calculated for sharpening, and at the same time interesting the intellect.

In like manner, a quarter of an hour each day, or half an hour on alternate days, might be devoted to another branch of mathematics, Geometry. This lesson, indeed, would be still less likely to weary the pupil, as it would be included the drawing of the explanatory figures.

That half which still remains of the hour we have allotted to the study of the exact, or natural sciences, would, at least for the first two years, be employed in exercising a spirit of observation, rather than in imparting any particular knowledge. And for this purpose the study of Natural History is peculiarly adapted, affording, as it does, objects for examination, rather than subjects for the exercise of the reasoning powers. Let us require girls to make notes of various things; such, for instance, as the observations they have made in their walks, the time of the year when particular flowers bloom, or particular seeds should be sown, or when certain birds or insects make their first appearance; and many other circumstances, which, though of course not of any use in a scientific point of view, cannot fail to be beneficial to the young observer.

Nor would it be long before this habit would lead to an inquiry after causes; heat, light, moisture,—all the various agents in the operations of nature, would excite their curiosity; and the interval from twelve to fifteen might be a proper period for the study of various branches of natural philosophy. Having already been exercised in calculation, they would not shrink from a more thorough investigation of the principles on which these sciences are founded; nor, perhaps, can the intellect be

in any way better exercised than in endeavouring to account for the phenomena of nature by those laws the knowledge of which has been by degrees acquired. Observation and reasoning are both called into action: it is found that results do not always agree with preconceived theories, and yet further reflection shows that nothing can be attributed to chance; and a much more extended application may hereafter be made of these observations.

Convinced, however, as we are of the utility of these studies, we foresee that many objections to them will be raised. Yet surely, in the present age, it will hardly be assumed that a degree of knowledge on such subjects must necessarily render girls pedantic. Women have now too much good sense to be pedants; this folly received its death-blow from Molière and Boileau. We see, occasionally, pretensions to simplicity, elegance, or excessive sensibility, but never to learning. Such an affectation would now be considered as unpleasing as it is ridiculous; and yet we are not sure that this species of vanity is not on the whole less pernicious than the desire, now so common, of experiencing and exciting emotions.

But another objection sometimes brought forward against these studies is, that they tend to destroy that gracefulness, that pleasing forgetfulness of self, that expression of candid

sensibility, so much to be desired in women. We might ask in return, whether the possession of these agreeable qualities will guarantee their good sense, their future happiness, and their salutary influence on their children and all around them? But, without being too severe, we are inclined to think that in the common routine of education the number and length of the lessons given, the immoderate practice even of desirable accomplishments, the want of a proper quantity of bodily exercise and of all leisure time, are far more destructive of these charms than the short but earnest application for which we plead. In fact, nothing so completely destroys these charms, and degrades them into a wretched affectation, as the anxiety to possess them; or, in other words, that vanity which we so especially deprecate.

It may with rather more justice be urged that it is not very easy to impart this slight degree of scientific instruction. The majority of mothers and governesses have never themselves received it; nor indeed might it be always possible to find masters for these studies at the moment they are wanted. The existence of these difficulties cannot be denied; but were the wishes of parents on this subject once made known, assistants would soon be found,—the demand would create the supply. Besides, as the reasoning powers are what we are chiefly

solicitous to cultivate, the most necessary studies for this purpose would be those of calculation and geometry ; and for these, assistance may at any time be easily procured.

As regards the formation of a taste for observation, mothers can have no difficulty, for both the natural and moral world furnish an abundant supply of objects for its exercise.

CHAPTER V.

ON THE STUDIES CONNECTED WITH THE CULTIVATION
OF THE IMAGINATION AND THE MEMORY.

WHEN, by means of such studies as demand a strong effort of attention, the mind of our pupil has acquired a species of developement not easily attained in any other way, we may safely indulge ourselves in the pleasure of cultivating those faculties in which she appears naturally to excel. A habit of application having once been formed, any study may be pursued with advantage; for by every kind of instruction the reasoning powers will be more or less exercised.

The study which we are about to recommend—that of languages—or, to speak in more general terms, of language—is particularly well calculated for promoting the developement of all the intellectual faculties. So strong is our conviction of this truth, that when treating of the education of boys we advised that this study should, for a period of three or four years, supersede almost every other; and in the case of girls, we would allot to it an hour a-day, (*that is to say, one quarter of the whole time*

allowed for instruction. During it there is equally long period.

Even supposing that we see no value in a woman's acquirements beyond their direct practical utility, it would still be misadvisable necessary that she should learn to read and write correctly, as the exercise of these arts is sure to be required in after-life. But we do not confine our views of instruction, and particularly of instruction in the principles of arithmetic, within such narrow bounds.

We need not here repeat our arguments in favour of this study as a means of developing the mental faculties. We would merely refer the reader to our former remarks on the subject.* But, though now occupied exclusively with the education of women, and fully acknowledging that what is of the greatest importance to them is a thorough acquaintance with their native tongue, we should still say that many advantages would arise from choosing the Latin language as an object of study.

In considering the instruction which women ought to receive, we should never forget that it may be their lot to marry, and have to train up a young family. As we see that the Deity has frequently employed the intellectual powers of human agents in the accomplishment of his

* Vol. II. Book V. Chap. IV.

great designs, so he appears to have especially intended to make use of the intellectual powers of women, by intrusting to their care the earliest instruction of the whole race. Their faculties seem intended to awaken other faculties in infinite succession. It is therefore of the utmost importance, in the education of the whole sex, to establish a sort of normal school, or general school for teachers; and is it not the case that classical education, in spite of all the efforts which have been made to overthrow it, is rising again from its temporary depreciation? It is recommended by the most profound thinkers, and recourse has again been had to it in many countries where it had been partially abandoned. What an advantage it would often be to a mother to possess such a knowledge of the elements of Latin as might enable her to prepare her sons for school, and thus not only spare herself the pain of an early separation, but preserve them from the dangers to which their as yet unstable principles must there be exposed!

It is, indeed, sometimes asserted that, as far as grammar is concerned, the study of the German language might, in some measure answer the purpose as well as that of Latin. But, besides that the uncouth letters of this language might, at first sight, inspire girls *with a distaste* for it, it has not been so well

systematized and elaborated for the purposes of education. It contains more anomalies, and affords less exercise to the reasoning powers of the learner. But, however inferior it seems to us as a means of developing the mind in childhood, it will afford a most interesting study at a later period, and the original beauties of its literature will be highly appreciated by every cultivated mind.

Should we bring down our views with respect to grammatical acquirements still lower, we might content ourselves with the use of Italian, in order to improve the knowledge of our own language by comparison with another. And, no doubt, this language, so soft and sonorous—this speaking music—which gives to poetry such innumerable charms, cannot fail to produce that taste for harmony which it is so desirable to cultivate in girls. Not only, however, is Italian in itself much too easy, but, after having learnt Latin, a knowledge of it is almost at once acquired. At the same time it will always constitute one of the luxuries — perhaps one of the most agreeable luxuries — of education.

The singular mechanism of the English language presents a very curious subject of examination to those who have made themselves well acquainted with the grammatical construction of other languages; but this very

peculiarity renders it inapplicable for the purpose we now have in view. As respects daily and practical utility, however, a knowledge of English is so valuable, that we should consider its early acquisition a great advantage. It opens to us a most extensive field of noble, pure, and invigorating literature. We find there, religious works in which the purest doctrines are closely connected with morality; books for children, simple, natural, instructive, and suited to every degree of advancement; and even novels, which are rendered much less dangerous from the dignified idea of the female character which they exhibit. In short, this language offers inexhaustible resources, intellectual as well as moral, for women of every age.*

We must never forget that our object is to attain the highest degree of excellence in our native tongue. After having, therefore, devoted half of the allotted hour to the task of transferring some vernacular passage into another language, the remainder of the time should

* These remarks on the English language, as a substitute for the Latin, will not, of course, apply to an English pupil; but the translator has thought them too interesting to be omitted. In some respects the French language would, to an English pupil, possess the same use and advantages as the English to a French one; though unfortunately much of the praise bestowed by Madame Necker de Saussure on the character of English literature, especially as regards novels, cannot be accorded to the French. — *Translator.*

be employed in a lesson of an imaginary kind, namely, in translating from that other language into the vernacular. This is an exercise to which we attach much importance.

We do not here allude to those merely literal translations which are intended only to show that the meaning of the original has been understood. These, indeed, ought to be read, rather than written, both in order to save time, and to prevent girls from acquiring a habit of writing incorrectly. What we would have is a carefully written translation: one, in short, which would serve as an exercise in composition. And this is an instance in which a mother can hardly be too fastidiously critical. Every incorrect expression, every instance of faulty construction, must be pointed out; and both mother and daughter may employ themselves in weighing the exact value of synonymous words, and the comparative merit of different phrases for expressing the true meaning of the author.

By this exercise the minds of girls would acquire one most valuable quality in which women are too often deficient,—mental patience. In a moral point of view they excel in this virtue, and, when called upon to support their own misfortunes, or alleviate those of others, often afford most beautiful examples of it; but as soon as they approach the region of

intellect, it appears entirely to vanish. Here it would seem as if they must reach the goal at one bound, or never arrive there at all. If their first attempt fail, all is lost. In the correctness and delicacy of their expressions, and in making an extemporary abstract of any thing, they are often peculiarly happy, as well as in their quick comprehension of particular phrases. They immediately see and clear away a difficulty, and perceive the depth of meaning couched in a sentence; and yet, at times, the slightest obscurity will completely arrest their progress. As soon as any extra-exertion of mind becomes necessary, all instruction is abandoned.

But to return to the subject of translations.

If it be allowed that a moderate exercise of the mind is very desirable for women, it seems to me that the unambitious employment of translating is perhaps better suited to them than any other. It requires no troublesome apparatus, and will allow of continual interruptions; the task may be abandoned and resumed with equal facility; thoughts which had hitherto only floated at random in the mind become fixed and determined, and different faculties are exercised and strengthened.

In order to interest girls in history, we must address ourselves to their imagination: the essential point is to give them a taste for it; this is of more importance than any great amount of

information on the subject, and is, indeed, attended with so many advantages, that it should be encouraged in every possible way. It not only supersedes reading of an injurious tendency, but contributes materially to enlarge the understanding. Nor can we do better, in order to insure our success in this respect, than avail ourselves of that dramatic imagination which reanimates past ages, calls up the heroes of former days, and represents them, with all their different passions, creeds, and manners, as acting on the theatre of human life. In speaking of the physical sciences, we recommended that all instruction should be founded on the most exact reasoning; but in moral studies, on the contrary, we would have every thing in accordance with the feelings of the heart, — full of life, energy, and activity.

Thus it is that children are inspired with a love of religion, and a feeling of patriotism, by the animated narratives of the Holy Scriptures, or the annals of their country; and, for the same reason, those marvellous events by which the early history of different nations is often enlivened possess a poetical colouring of which we should not be too anxious, by a premature and ill-timed severity of criticism, to deprive them.

Happily the time seems gone by when history was imparted to children in anecdotes; when

the noblest incidents of antiquity were committed to the memory in this isolated manner, and the pictures, torn from their appropriate frame-work, exhibited only a false or childish representation. But portions of ancient history of greater length are well adapted for exciting interest in the youthful mind; and by means of abridgments the connecting thread of these various narratives may easily be pursued. In this manner the progress made by girls will be much more intellectual than it could be from the dry study of names and dates. The same plan may be adopted with regard to modern times. Selections from the historians of contemporary events, or from authors who have imbibed their spirit, will serve to mark the progress of each successive age; and if the most important facts of each century are in some degree connected together and committed to memory, this is all that is necessary. As we are obliged, from want of time, to make some sacrifices, let it be the dead letter rather than the spirit of history that we give up.

Some dates, however, are requisite. After a course of interesting reading, our pupils may be employed in making tables of contemporary events. In the first instance the dates marked in these tables may be "few and far between;" two or three for each of those centuries with which they are best acquainted will be sufficient,

but by degrees, as their knowledge becomes enlarged, others may be inserted in the intermediate spaces. It is of little consequence to know exactly in what year such a battle was fought, or such a king crowned ; the important thing is to ascertain how far great events in different countries have corresponded in point of time.

This plan, however, cannot be pursued for any great length of time. History does not consist entirely in a series of dramatic narratives, and a dry exposition of facts and dates. It presents general moral views which should not be passed over ; it affords instruction both for the mind and the heart ; nor are girls often deficient in that developement of the intellect which enables them to profit by its lessons. Even should they find a difficulty in estimating the morality of *human* actions in times of which they know so little, yet God as He appears in history, God accomplishing His vast designs, awakening nations to a moral existence, and leading them by different paths to the knowledge of Himself, and to the light of Christianity and civilization, affords an inexhaustible subject, which is in some measure adapted to the youngest capacities. Taking as her guide some good abstract of universal history, an enlightened mother may easily explain to her daughter the amazing prospect unfolded in the designs of God for the amelioration of the human race.

As the study of history should in the first instance be addressed to the imagination in a poetical point of view, so should that of geography be adapted to its picturesque tendencies; and the interest which would thus be imparted to these studies would effectually prevent the daily hour which we have allotted to them from ever appearing tedious.

Our pupil will of course have acquired, at an early age, an elementary and general knowledge of geography; but as she grows older, this study becomes in so many ways implicated with that of history, and the connection is drawn so close by innumerable political combinations, that it is impossible any longer to separate them. Physical geography furnishes the immoveable base on which various political divisions are successively placed. As girls are always delighted with manual occupation, they may be usefully and pleasantly employed in tracing on transparent paper the intricacies of political divisions, and then laying them on a map in which the divisions of physical geography are strongly marked.

As both tracing geographical charts, and forming historical tables of contemporary events are exercises of local memory, they belong more properly to the hour set aside for the cultivation of this faculty. One half of this hour must be employed in learning by heart those parts of any

study which require to be perfectly known, and exactly retained in the memory. A degree of mechanism must always exist in the apprenticeship to every branch of education; nor is it any disadvantage that girls should be obliged at times to endure a few moments of wearisomeness. We desire, however, to prepare them for a more interesting connection between the imagination and the memory, and the remainder of the time allowed for intellectual instruction will be devoted to this object. There is perhaps nothing which affords more pure and soothing pleasure than the possession of a store of beautiful poetry treasured up in the memory, and we should earnestly wish our daughters to be richly endowed in this respect. Poetry, in fact, leads us to contemplate every thing from a more exalted station; it elevates our views, and softens even the bitterness of grief itself, by showing us that our distresses are only what are incident to human nature; it ennobles and expands our existence, and, anticipating the salutary effect of time, dispels our cares and anxieties. In solitude, in the sleepless hours of night, in those moments of involuntary idleness to which a woman is too often reduced by want of health, its musical cadences fall soothingly on the troubled mind, and restore serenity to the heart. Its power of elevating the thoughts renders a taste

for it particularly desirable for women, charged as they are with so many minute cares, and whose minds are so liable to become contracted by their necessarily trivial occupations. They require a sort of enthusiastic impulse to make them feel the attractions which duty, even in its severer aspect, and when stripped of those marks of esteem which enable them to support its rigorous exactions, still possesses. The influence of religion is, no doubt, still more powerful in this respect; but religion is itself the most beautiful poetry of the soul, and the mind will be much better fitted for receiving its heavenly aid, when selfish anxieties have been allayed, and the soul has recovered from a state of moral disorganization.

However injudicious it would be to present dangerous and hitherto unknown inclinations, clothed in all the seducing charms of poetical language, there can be no doubt as to the advantage of being able to invest those sentiments which do honour to human nature, and which constitute in a more especial manner the happiness and glory of women, with noble and beautiful imagery. On this account we consider it particularly desirable that girls should commit to memory many devotional pieces from our best authors, and should have their minds enriched with a store of such passages, either in prose or poetry, as describe the most

innocent earthly affections, and have a tendency to foster a taste for intellectual pleasures. Similar passages^t may also be selected for them from writers in those foreign languages with which they have become acquainted; a variety of fresh impressions will thus be imparted, and a new light thrown on many subjects of morality; — a light which perhaps might not have reached them through the medium of their native tongue.

Supposing our subdivisions of the specified four hours to be adopted, the portions may be distributed through the day at the discretion of the teacher.

Let us briefly recapitulate the advice which has been given as to the employment of these hours.

The first should be devoted to mathematical and physical studies.

The second, to those of grammar and languages, both native and foreign.

The third, to those of history and geography.

The fourth, to such exercises of the memory as are required for the preceding studies; and to those also which tend to the cultivation of the imagination.

It will at once be seen that this last hour is, in fact, only a sort of supplement to the others; so that the whole course of instruction, when

reduced to its first elements, consists of only three branches of study. But from these three branches others arise in an almost infinite succession; and it is from this extension of them that our observations derive their greatest importance. It seems to us that if these three studies could be continued at certain, not very distant, intervals, throughout the whole course of life, the mind would never become rusty, the faculties would preserve their original vigour even in an advanced age, and we should be saved from that narrow-mindedness which is the consequence of a too exclusive train of thinking.

It will be observed that in our selection of studies we have seldom deviated from the beaten path of instruction. The only innovations we have introduced are, the study of the physical sciences, and the committing to memory some of the most beautiful passages in national, or foreign poetry: we acknowledge that we have much at heart the attainment of these two objects. They enlarge the intellectual powers in opposite directions, and thus serve as a mutual counterpoise.

In fact, if attention and imagination form the two constituent parts of the intellect, does it not seem especially desirable to cultivate both in women? They may not, perhaps, ever acquire the highest degree of power over their

attention, but they are at present deficient even in that inferior degree of it, which they certainly might attain.

Let us not deceive ourselves: genuine intellectual power is always esteemed; it is by the false assumption of it that people are disgusted. However tolerant men may wish to be, their real feeling of contempt for narrow understandings is continually betraying itself.

CHAPTER VI.

STUDY OF THE FINE ARTS.

WHEN we consider the fine arts in reference to the education of girls, various questions arise in the mind. It cannot be denied, that there seems a natural connection between these arts and those faculties with which women are peculiarly endowed. The very same intellectual gifts which confer on their feeble sex so much power and so many charms, tend also to embellish talent. The dispositions most favourable to the arts — such as a lively sensibility, a slight touch of enthusiasm, a taste for the beauties of nature, an exquisite susceptibility to impressions, a wish to embellish this material world in order to extract from it the essence of a pure and heavenly existence — are also those which we delight to recognize in women.

But our present consideration is, not whether the constitution of the female mind is favourable to the cultivation of the fine arts, but whether it is desirable to call in the aid of these arts in order to encourage propensities already, perhaps, too powerful. Many writers

on this subject have, with a stern severity, asserted, that the study of the fine arts, and especially of music, tends to create a susceptibility to lively emotions, and a wish to excite them in others, a continually increasing vanity arising from the expression of these feelings, a great waste of time, and a liability to form dangerous connections. The motives which give rise to these objections must be respected. If we can succeed in obviating them as far as relates to the cultivation of music, it will hardly be necessary afterwards to enter into any arguments in defence of the other arts.

And after all what is our object? Is it to raise the fine arts to their highest point, to enable them to display all their power, and to consider our pupil only as the priestess of their temple? Far from it. It is not the glory of the art which parents have in view; their interest is confined to their daughters' advantage; their only object to procure for her a pleasure, a resource, an instrument of development, and perhaps also an additional attraction. The art, whatever it may be, is not in their estimation an essential thing; it is only an agreeable auxiliary, an embellishment, the value of which is destroyed if either not kept in proper subordination, or tending to injure the consistency of character. In this, as in every

other instance, all depends on a due proportion being preserved.

When viewed in this light, surely it argues an unworthy distrust of simple good sense to predict so much evil from the study of music. It is scarcely necessary to allude to the emotions and even passions which this art is said to excite, for these cannot be attributed to any power inherent to its nature. Are you obliged to associate with it such poetry as may corrupt the youthful mind? Will you allow your daughter to sing words, which she ought not to speak, or even to hear? Do you not possess in this respect a privilege, perhaps one of the noblest with which human beings are endowed — the power of choice? Unless we made use of this privilege, almost every species of developement would be, in a greater or less degree, dangerous; and the most beautiful attributes of our nature might be regarded only as hidden snares.

Let us not, therefore, be afraid of cultivating in our children this natural and charming talent. Having entirely banished vanity from our education, let us hallow the gifts of Heaven by our gratitude. If girls were inspired with a simple genuine love of music, it would not be abandoned as soon as it ceases to be the means of exciting admiration. How much pleasure *would* it give children, what a charm would it

diffuse over the domestic circle, and how soothing would be its effect in restoring serenity to the young performer herself, whenever her tranquillity has been disturbed by the little troubles incident to her age!

With respect to the objection founded on the danger arising from the intercourse between master and pupil, we really do not consider it deserving of notice. The very attempt to refute it would be an insult both to mothers and daughters; some painful examples have no doubt been occasionally adduced, but every one knows what evil results may be produced by infatuated indiscretion.

It seems almost unnecessary to assert, that vigilance can never be dispensed with in education, and that our care must even be redoubled at this important period. So far, indeed, would we carry this watchfulness, that to the ardent admirers of talent our precautions may appear almost absurd, and they may attach very little value to the moderate degree of success with which we are satisfied. To them the fine arts — depending on enthusiasm for their existence, and growing up and flourishing under its influence — present only a mean and stunted appearance, when subjected to the laws imposed on girls by a sense of propriety. But however necessary energy may be to these arts, a state of harmony is no less so; and in this

respect the expression of them will be in accordance with the native modesty of a young woman. Though we may feel it necessary to clip their wings a little, they will still, even in this state of demi-captivity, retain their power to charm.

But, it may be asked, how can you be sure of acquiring such a control over them? How can you prevent the fire of genius from breaking forth? What would you do should you have a Mozart, or a Malibran amongst your daughters?

In the first place we should be long in believing this to be the case, and still longer in appearing to believe it; and in the mean time we should be only the more anxious to bestow upon our pupil those principles, and that solid instruction, which would render her capable hereafter of either rejecting, or safely accepting, that celebrity which might be her lot. But it is hardly worth while to occupy our time in the consideration of a case occurring perhaps only once in a century.

It is, however, by no means uncommon to meet with a pupil whose talents, if cultivated at the expense of much time and labour, may be such as to raise her to the level of a second-rate artist. She might be talked of in society as a genius, and make a great sensation as an amateur performer. But this is the very thing

which in our opinion is so much to be deprecated, and which will always be avoided by sensible parents. They will neither allow the time required for bringing this talent to such a degree of excellence to be purchased at the expense of other branches of education, nor permit its progress to be accelerated by the applauses of society.

Every kind of success is dangerous in proportion to the mental intoxication which it produces; and is there any brilliant success by which some degree of intoxication is not produced? As regards the arts, especially where success receives an immediate reward, and the enthusiasm of talent is excited by the tumult of applause, the trial is far too great for a youthful mind, and makes all common life appear, in comparison, flat and uninteresting.

There is, however, something in the idea of genius to which we cannot refuse our admiration; and every woman feels a sort of pride in beholding the brow of one of her own sex encircled with its glory. But let a mother make herself acquainted with the final destiny of these gifted beings who attract for a time universal attention. Let her learn it even from themselves; and then let her say whether she would desire such a fate for her child! A feverish state of enthusiasm, a continual struggle in her feelings between her aspirations and the

reality by which she is surrounded, and it may be even greater evils than these, reveal the woman in the artist, and betray her intrinsic weakness even whilst exercising such power over others.

There are few instances in which great talents do not obtain entire dominion over the existence, absorbing the whole time, and engrossing the desires, feelings, and thoughts. But this is not surely what we should desire for a Christian woman. Even considering the subject only in a worldly point of view, I should say that the developement produced exclusively by the arts—at least as it usually manifests itself—is by no means salutary.

To this we may add that society, however frivolous it may appear, feels so strongly the necessity of a moral equilibrium in women, that any excess, even of talent, appears out of place; she must be superior to her talent, otherwise she is considered only as an amateur, and addressed only on the subject of her art. Her society is sought by professional painters and musicians, and feeling more sympathy with them than with the generality of those around her, she is apt to lose caste. A woman in the higher classes must possess a superior degree of intelligence, gracefulness, and dignity—an elevation of character—to enable her to bear up *against* the distinction of being an artist.

On the other hand, there would be little difficulty in never allowing our daughters to pass the bounds of mediocrity in their study of the arts, and it would be very easy to produce abundance of such examples. But what rank can be assigned in education to a study in which too much success is not to be desired? How much time and money have often been wasted on these unintellectual exercises! A sonata, which has cost the parents many sacrifices, and the daughter many tears, after all wearies those who are condemned to hear it, and gains only a few words of faint praise, but too well understood by the poor victim herself.

Is nothing to be expected then from these studies but either disappointment or danger? Is there no middle path alike removed from an insipid mediocrity and an undesirable success? We think there is, though we hardly feel ourselves capable of tracing it.

It appears to us that in those countries where the cultivation of these talents is not favoured by climate, or by a superior mode of instruction, masters generally adopt a very injudicious plan with their pupils. Instead of seeking to inspire them with a taste for the art, they suppose them to possess it already, and without having enabled them to feel its beauty, subject them to the labour of a severe apprenticeship. A dry mechanical process is the object of their anxious

attention. Hence it follows that the greater number of those who set out, stop before they have proceeded far; and if by some happy chance a pupil braves the hardships of her initiation, and overcomes the physical difficulties presented to her, the master, little accustomed to such progress, bestows upon her a degree of applause which excites her vanity, before she has any real feeling for the charms of the art itself.

Considering the arts as merely one mode of developing the soul, expression is the only thing which appears to us of much value: to obtain this—pure, gentle, and full of meaning—would be our great object; without it, music is little better than noise. The exercise of certain organs must always be required in the arts; but we should distinguish such as are intellectual from those which are merely mechanical; and as the ear is the guiding power in music, we should seek to cultivate and perfect this organ as much as possible.

One great advantage arising from this plan would be that the master would very soon be able to judge of the capability of his pupil. Where there is a natural impediment, it is not very likely that even that tardy development, by the hope of which we are sometimes encouraged, will ever take place. Should a pupil cease to make any progress, should she display

weariness and disgust, let the study of music be at once and willingly abandoned, without any expressions of regret, and especially without any reproaches; so that she may understand that it is an agreeable, but not necessary accomplishment. However desirable it may be for girls to be aware of the difference between such branches of education as are essential, and those which are mere luxuries, they should never be permitted to pursue even the most trifling occupations in an indolent manner.

The remarks which have now been made with respect to music will equally apply to the art of dancing; an art which cannot be altogether neglected without disadvantage to the pupil. In this, as in every thing else, the common saying, "Whatever is worth doing at all, is worth doing well," is an excellent maxim.

But the study of drawing seems to us deserving of more perseverance than that of music, since here even a moderate degree of skill has its reward. The cultivation of this art has one effect which may easily be associated with a religious feeling—it tends to excite a love and admiration for the beauties of nature;—we view them with the eye of an artist, and delight in retracing those scenes where we have been entirely absorbed by the soothing pleasure of contemplation. And what a privilege it is to be able to represent these scenes on paper, and

thus revive the feelings they had excited! Let us therefore by all means encourage the unassuming attempts of our daughters, and not despise their little albums. They will remind them hereafter of the tranquil enjoyments of youth, and recall to them the parents whose tender affection was ever providing for their true happiness.

In drawing, as in music, we would begin by cultivating the master organ, which in this case is the eye. Let the learner be taught to judge of the comparative size of angles, or length of lines; to understand the effect of fore-shortening and of distance; and to reduce the same outlines to different scales, taking care that the exact proportions are preserved. Still, however, we would say, Do not force nature;—endeavour to inspire a taste for the art, to animate your pupil with its spirit, but do not let it engross much time. Always remember that, after all, the arts are only the luxuries of existence.

So important does this consideration appear to us, that we believe it impossible to cultivate the arts both of music and drawing during the period of which we are now speaking, without detriment to the other branches of education. To sensible parents the amount of time required in order to secure proficiency must appear far too considerable. We would not, therefore, recommend the study of drawing to be commenced

before the age of fifteen or sixteen, unless that of music should on any account have been previously abandoned. Our reason for giving the precedence in this instance to music is, that the organs on which success in this art depends require to be exercised at a much earlier period than those employed in drawing, where great excellence may be attained at almost any age, and which will form a new and interesting study for that more advanced period of youth when it seems so necessary that every employment should possess some degree of attraction.

It may perhaps be asked, whether the moderation which we have been recommending in the cultivation of the fine arts will not prevent any beneficial effect from these studies. And here it seems important that we should make ourselves clearly understood. On our plan execution will not have been perfected; it may even be poor—too little exercised—but we should not on this account infer a deficiency of talent, if a feeling for the art exist; the effect produced may be deficient, but not the talents of the young performer. If truth, intelligence, and harmony be displayed in the execution, if the love of beauty be manifested, let us not be discouraged by a few faults.

If, both with respect to science and to the arts we have seemed to consider the future more *than the present*, and looked to hope

rather than possession, we trust that we have by so doing excluded from these studies their greatest bane—any feeling of pride or vanity. It must be quite evident that a girl's half-finished drawings will never be displayed in rich frames, that the treasures of her portfolio will never be exhibited to wearied and uninterested eyes, and that in her musical performances she will never enter into any competition with those youthful amateurs who are the glory of their masters, and sometimes the object of real admiration. Her true feeling of the art may however inspire her with one kind of genuine excellence seldom attained by private performers. When playing in concert she will desire, not that attention should be drawn to her own performance, but that the general effect should be good. Even when playing a solo she will not be led away by the wish of executing isolated passages brilliantly. Her anxiety will be to display the merit of the composer rather than her own; and her auditors will not exclaim, What astonishing execution!—but, What beautiful music!

Thus it is that even in the arts the absence of all selfish feeling may be manifested: thus it is that no human action is devoid of a moral attribute, and that the happy consequences arising from the education of the heart diffuse themselves over the whole region of instruction.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE EMPLOYMENT OF TIME WITHOUT REFERENCE
TO INTELLECTUAL CULTIVATION.

THE subject of physical education is one which we would willingly have passed over in silence. It is with regret that we are obliged to accuse mothers of not attending, with sufficient consistency and good sense, to the health of their daughters. So ready as they are to take alarm whenever these objects of their affection are attacked with the slightest illness, it would seem hardly possible that they should be guilty of neglect in this respect. Nor is it so much want of care that we lament, as injudicious care; and this is for the most part the fault of education.

What is the reason that women in the higher and more cultivated ranks of life are generally the most delicate? Surely in this class more than in any other mothers might procure for their children the most precious of all earthly blessings! But the fact is, that, completely engrossed by the advancement of their children in other respects, they expect their *physical* advancement to take place as a matter of course.

And if we did not interfere about any thing, this might be the case. Nature would manage very well without our assistance if we left her entirely at liberty; but this is not compatible with female education. The control we exercise over our daughters is often so gentle, we make such good use of their self-love, of the influence of example, and the idea of duty, that even their will becomes subject to ours; and many impulses which would have been extremely salutary, are restrained without a feeling of regret. But physical organization is not so easily satisfied; it slights moral causes; if we deny it the free exercise of its powers, it withholds its strength, and withdraws its renovating faculty. It is therefore useless to reckon on nature, when she no longer acts in our favour. The evil that has been incurred by departing from her ways can only be repaired by active, positive, premeditated care; and we must be thankful if she do not refuse to second our efforts.

Extreme affection makes weak minds reject for a length of time any idea of danger. As long as mothers perceive no evident disadvantage from following a particular plan, they are satisfied; yet it not unfrequently happens that those disadvantages which are the least evident are the most to be dreaded. "My daughter is very well;" a mother says, "I see no change in

her." But this is the very reason why she ought to feel alarmed ; for changes ought to take place. Additional strength and fresh elasticity ought to be continually manifesting themselves. It is one of the natural laws by which childhood is governed, that unless every other development is accompanied by *physical* development, general decay both of body and mind will ensue.

We are so accustomed in the present age to behold delicate women, that for want of good models the ideal image which we form of them has been very much changed. What are the characteristics of beauty as they are represented in modern novels? Instead of a bright and healthy complexion, a graceful activity, and youthful vivacity, we hear of a *slender ærial form, a sylph-like figure, an interesting paleness occasionally relieved by a shade of carnation, an expressive countenance gently tinged with melancholy*. But it must at once be perceived that all these characteristics are exactly those indicative of delicate health. An extremely slender figure, a fitting colour, and a languid expression, afford no very favourable augury for a future mother, or for a wife, who may perhaps hereafter be called upon to assist her husband in adversity. Yet the imagination of mothers as well as daughters is fascinated by such descriptions : they are afraid of destroying these interesting charms ; and we meet with some girls

who will not eat for fear of growing fat, and others who will not walk for fear of enlarging their feet. Can any thing be more pitiable?

We are far indeed from wishing to form Clo-rindas or Amazons; but the opposite extreme into which the women of our time have fallen proves that the race has degenerated; indeed it is the subject of universal complaint. The victims of maternity are become more numerous, and mothers are seldom allowed to nurse their children on account of the evil consequences both to themselves and their offspring. How is it that in an age when medical science has made such astonishing progress, the health of women, of that portion of the human race on whom the health of all depends, should be so much deteriorated?

Physical inaction produces the most deplorable results, particularly in towns: if girls have been taken out to walk, whenever the weather was fine, it is supposed that every thing necessary has been done. But what beneficial effect can arise from a formal walk of this kind, during which they are obliged to hold themselves erect, to take care of their dress, to speak in an under tone, and even to impose a restraint on their countenances? Their circulation is hardly so much accelerated as to diffuse a slight degree of warmth through their limbs; *a great* proportion of their muscles remains un-

exercised ; those especially which are connected with the spine acquire no strength : the spine itself, weak and flexible, gives way beneath the weight of the head and arms, and a curvature is soon formed in its weakest part.

Why is it that this is so seldom the case with boys ? Because when they come out of school, they are allowed to amuse themselves as they like, and their whole body is in continual action. The benefit which they derive from gymnastic exercises is generally acknowledged ; yet how much more necessary would these seem for girls, who are not allowed, as boys are, to jump, leap, play at ball, or run races, in their walks.

Rousseau regrets the loss of the gardens attached to the convents of former days, where the school girls were allowed to run about and play at various games in the open air. But would it not be easy to obtain the same advantage elsewhere ? In an age so fruitful in establishments for education, it surely would not be difficult to have in most large towns enclosures where girls, without being exposed to public view, might be allowed to engage in such bodily exercises as tend to invigorate the health, under the superintendence of respectable persons, to whom mothers would feel no fear of intrusting their daughters : girls would derive the greatest pleasure from such games as lead

to the free use of their physical powers; and the salutary effects arising from gaiety of heart and from the additional impulse given to the circulation would soon be perceptible. The apparatus necessary for such gymnastic exercises as are proper for females (*Calisthenics*, as they are sometimes called) might also be here provided, together with mistresses for teaching the art.

Public attention has been much called to this subject in America. In a journal published in that country (to which I owe many of the preceding observations), a medical practitioner has assigned three principal causes of the delicacy so universal amongst women. The too great use of warm liquids, especially of tea — the custom of wearing tight stays — and, above all, the want of sufficient bodily exercise. To these causes he also adds some moral agencies, such as perpetual thwartings, and the bitterness of feeling to which they give rise; in short, every thing which tends to arrest the flow of animal spirits, and to destroy natural gaiety.

Different methods may of course be followed in order to obtain the same results; but we feel that we cannot too strenuously urge upon parents the necessity of allotting, at least, an hour and a half each day to the various methods of strengthening the physical powers of

their daughters. One half of this time might be employed in regular exercises, such as calisthenics, or dancing, from which more varied and graceful movements are acquired than what they spontaneously perform. The remainder of the time should be passed in the open air, and should be occupied with different games and exercises. Were such a plan regularly followed, an elasticity and energy would be imparted to girls, which would be conspicuous in its reflected influence on their studies, their feelings, their whole moral existence; whilst their physical existence would not only acquire a more confirmed state of health, but would recover that beauty of form, proportion, and colour, of which, by our wretched refinements, it has been deprived.

In this instance, therefore, the time which we assign is no longer a proportion amongst different occupations — its daily duration must be absolute and invariable.

It is no doubt perfectly right that one portion in our arrangement of their time should be claimed for those occupations which are more peculiarly feminine. Needle-work, whether useful or ornamental, may be classed amongst the arts; and, indeed, as a necessary art is perhaps more entitled to our respect than any other; what in the poorer classes is a strict and sacred duty, often be-

X comes a work of charity in those who are in easier circumstances, and forms a distinguishing characteristic of that attentive interest to the wants of others, which constitutes at once the honour and the happiness of women. We should, therefore, earnestly desire this branch of education to be sedulously cultivated. To be able to shape, arrange, and put together the various parts of different articles of dress, must always be a valuable acquirement for young women in every rank of life.

→ Fancy work, too, no doubt possesses a certain degree of value; and, inasmuch as it is connected with a taste for what is beautiful, may deserve to be classed, though in a subordinate rank, amongst the fine arts. The intention of such work is not simply to produce beauty, but to render some useful object ornamental also. In this respect the occupation is well adapted to the various qualities required in women; and on many accounts both the employment and its results are particularly agreeable to girls.

We do not therefore deny that these occupations possess some advantages; all we desire is, that they be fairly and judiciously estimated. We would exhort mothers never to allow such employments to encroach on the morning hours — of all others the most precious — nor on that time which is required

for the necessary intellectual, and physical developement. Let half an hour be allowed for learning the mechanical part of these works, whether useful or ornamental; but let the practice of them take place in an evening when the family group is assembled, when reading aloud is going on; and let them never be allowed so completely to engross the attention as to take away the power of listening to conversation or reading. The habit of being absent in mind whilst present in body is most offensive, and may almost be called a usurpation of the place which is thus only materially occupied.

The advantage of a general cultivation of the intellectual faculties is often evinced in matters which at first sight appear totally unconnected with it. We may judge of this by the quickness with which girls who have received a judicious education acquire expertness in these kinds of work, compared with the tedious length of time taken up in learning them by those poor women whose object is only thereby to gain a livelihood.

In addition to the above-mentioned allotments of time, about an hour should be allowed for domestic occupations, such as household duties, and the necessary cares of the person and the wardrobe; in short, to the attainment of a love of physical order in all its departments. A still longer time may be devoted to

drawing closer the ties of relationship, to a sort of introduction into social life, through the medium of family parties, more or less numerous; but this is a subject to which we shall hereafter recur. In the mean time one hour alone remains to be disposed of; one, however, to which we would allot a determinate place, and of which the destination should be inviolable.

The employment of this hour we would leave entirely to the pupil herself. Were she not allowed some degree of liberty, her character would become weak and undecided, and she would have no opportunity of exercising her will. She must not, from the uniform routine of her occupations, run the risk of becoming a mere machine; nor must the real necessity which exists of prescribing the employment of her time be the means of imposing fetters on her which can never be broken. Some degree of freedom, no doubt, will always exist during the hours of meals, and when engaged in society, or bodily exercises; but this is not enough. She must also have the power of forming plans, and executing designs. She must be able to follow the impulses of her heart, and to yield to the emotions of friendship and benevolence.

Not, however, that these things should be exacted from her. Nothing should be ab-

solutely required, except that she should have the consciousness of having employed her hour of liberty judiciously, and that she should render an account to herself of the manner in which it has been spent. Almost any kind of occupation should be allowed: ~~any~~ work, reading for amusement, walking, making purchases, even idleness, if she declare that she feels the want of rest. All that is necessary is, that she should decide on something, and that she should observe how the hour is passed. If this be not done, the mother is at liberty to re-assume her authority as to the disposal of this hour, and to impose upon her some occupation.

Nothing is of more importance to women than that they should be duly impressed with the value of the present moment. Their lives are wasted, and their mental and bodily powers weakened, by supineness and indifference. A degree of decision, a premeditated determination as to the employment of their time, seem to us as necessary for girls in their hour of freedom as a spirit of submission at other times.

We will now give a tabular summary of the proportional duration of their several occupations:—

Religious Duties.

	Hours.
Devotional and other exercises -	- 1

Literary and Scientific Studies.

Intellectual cultivation :—

1. Elements of calculation and of physical sciences - -	} 4
2. Study of languages - -	
3. History and geography - -	
4. Exercises for the memory - -	

The Fine Arts.

Music or drawing - - - -	1½
	<hr/> 6½

Physical Duties and Recreation.

Bodily exercise - - - -	1½
Feminine and household occupations -	1½
Hours of freedom, meals, and domestic society - - - -	4½
	<hr/> 7½
	<hr/> 14 h ^{rs.}

It will be perceived by a reference to the above table that a greater proportion of time is assigned to recreations, or mere physical employments, than to intellectual studies. We cannot, therefore, be accused of requiring from girls too great a degree of mental application. But the time which is demanded for a really intellectual education should never be abridged ; it is, therefore, absolutely necessary, if we would preserve the four hours allotted to it inviolate,

that not a moment should be wasted. All long preparations, every irrelevant word, must be forbidden; and a valuable habit would by this means be formed. The power of instantly fixing the attention on any given subject tends materially to strengthen the character, and constitutes what is generally called presence of mind.

It is, perhaps, in vain to expect that mothers will ever introduce into their discipline that rigid adherence to rule in which the chief advantage of a school consists; yet we cannot help thinking, that it might be in their power to establish a greater degree of regularity as to the distribution of time than is generally done. Owing to the variety of her household duties, the mistress of a family must necessarily be liable to continual interruptions whilst engaged in teaching her children; but could not these interruptions be frequently foreseen, and provided for, by some alteration in her arrangements, and by having some employment in reserve with which her daughters might be occupied during her absence? Making translations or extracts, copying maps or historical tables, might form a sort of continuation to an interrupted lesson.

Generally speaking, the true art of teaching consists not so much in the power of imparting our own knowledge, as in that of creating in

our pupils the desire and the capability of acquiring it for themselves.

It seems to us, that the time which a mother devotes to the instruction of her daughters is most usefully employed when she sets them to work in her presence, examines the tasks they have already performed, and arranges those for the next day. Having thoroughly explained any new terms which may occur in their lesson-books, these books themselves are their best instructors. The exercises there recommended require from the pupil a degree of mental effort, which is increased by the knowledge that she will afterwards have to undergo an examination upon them. Her intellectual faculties are excited by the expectation of being questioned as to the results of her solitary studies; whilst by such lessons as are merely listened to in silence the mind is left in a passive state. When once the mental energy is roused, and the conscience becomes interested in the proper employment of time, the greatest difficulties of private education have been overcome.

If a judicious arrangement have been made in the relative proportion of their various occupations, it will not be found difficult to maintain a state of mental equilibrium in our pupils. They will then voluntarily recur to *their* devotional reading, will themselves favour

the different plans for their instruction, and will be satisfied with a moderate share of recreation. But it sometimes happens that a previous state of fatigue betrays itself by the craving that is felt of breaking through, as much as possible, all former habits; wearied of the restraint imposed by education, the pupils yield to an excess of vivacity, and any thing which creates a variety in their ordinary occupations is a refreshment to their minds. From such symptoms, and others of a similar kind, we learn that a change of plan is necessary; perhaps that a greater proportion of leisure is required; but nothing should induce a mother to abandon the reins in education. A particular method may be injudicious, but some method is absolutely necessary.

We must not conclude this part of our subject without adverting to the employment of that especial day of rest,—Sunday. On other occasions when the ordinary routine of occupations is suspended, it is with the avowed intention of enabling girls to take such rest, or recreation as may be necessary;—but on Sunday this is not the case. Here the rest is only the means,—the way, which is to lead to the desired end, of sanctification. “*Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy,*” hath said our God; and can there, we would ask, be a more important object either in education or in life?

In the mind of a religious mother the great object of this day will always be present ; nor will she ever have to reproach herself that an institution — so holy, so evidently bearing the impress of Deity, and which, under the appearance of a homage exacted by the Creator for his own glory, is in reality a benefit conferred by him on the human race, — has been allowed to fail of its intended purpose.

During the course of this holy day public worship and private devotion, an examination into past faults, and into the best means of avoiding them for the future, together with some exercises of a religious description, will serve to cultivate in girls the duties of piety. But a mother will recollect that Sunday has also a secondary destination. The prohibition to work had another end in view besides that of affording leisure for the fulfilment of religious duties ; — *that the son of thine handmaid and the stranger may be refreshed* *, — an expression which seems to imply that renewal of life, that reviving of the faculties, which is experienced on passing out of an obligatory state of any kind, into one of an opposite nature. A mother may therefore think it right to refresh the spirits and strength of her daughter by allowing her some recreation in a course of life

* Exodus xxiii. 12.

often too unvaried and sedentary ; but she will always be careful that it should not be of a kind to disturb the holy solemnity of the day. There are many innocent amusements which it is unnecessary to specify here ; and we might perhaps seem almost to profane the sacred duty of charity by classing the performance of it amongst the recreations of Sunday. Yet after the labours of an education, the tendency of which must at all times be to concentrate attention on self, would it not be a refreshment to girls to be the bearers of comfort to the unfortunate ?

What can be more soothing than — forgetting all ideas of self — to occupy ourselves with the happiness of others ? Can there be a greater pleasure than what arises from an active benevolence ? How forcibly are our thoughts abstracted from those ideas of luxury and vanity which are only too common in the higher classes, by the sight of the humble dwellings of the poor ! If the holy day of rest be occupied with thoughts of God, and of our neighbour, its two-fold destination will be fulfilled, and the two-fold command of the law obeyed.

CHAPTER VIII.

TERMINATION OF CHILDHOOD.

TOWARDS the conclusion of the period we are now considering the effects of education become more and more perceptible. Under the guidance of a judicious mother good habits have been formed, the understanding has been enlarged, and the conscience become more scrupulous, as well as more enlightened; and whilst many of the most amiable dispositions of childhood,—such as candour, docility, gaiety, confidence in her instructors, have been preserved, there is in the conduct of our pupil a more marked determination of the will, better intentions, and greater reflection; so that, amidst all the levity of her age, we discern in anticipation that fascinating being, that union of gentle affections and pleasing gracefulness with more solid qualities, which will render her hereafter a blessing to her parents and the delight of her whole family.

Under the most favourable circumstances, however, everything must at present be constantly varying. The age itself is a troublesome one in many respects; and faults of a nature

similar to those we remarked in boys at the same period, are often manifested. A second, and perhaps more dangerous crisis, takes place. The first occurred when it became necessary for the child to be subjected to the restraint of lessons; her activity and attention having been hitherto entirely bestowed on external objects, and her pleasure derived from the exercise of her physical powers, it was no easy task to fix her volatile mind, and direct it to any intellectual occupation. Yet this task was accomplished; and by taking care to satisfy that craving for bodily activity, always so great in childhood, an equilibrium was for a time established. But in proportion as the faculties increased simultaneously in strength, our pupil began to despise what was required from her. Efforts leading to no external result appeared to her useless and tiresome; wearied of being constantly occupied with the future, she became anxious to enter upon real and present existence.

This anxiety, though it may occasionally be too great, should nevertheless by degrees be satisfied; a girl ought at an early age to acquire some knowledge of the concerns of actual life. Yet there must necessarily be so much irregularity in the influence she wishes to exert on others, her experience can have been so little exercised, and her reasoning must often be so inferior to her sharpened intellectual faculties,

that her introduction into real life should take place almost imperceptibly. Even when her previous education has been good, this precaution is necessary; how much more necessary then must it be, when such has not been the case! How many faults will appear, as soon as an opportunity of displaying themselves is afforded!

What is it that often renders those tall girls, who are neither children nor women, so unprepossessing? Their petulance and self-conceit, their pride in any petty advantages, whether natural or acquired, their uncourteous replies, the importance they attach to mere trifles, their concealed or open discontent when any thing happens not to suit their humour, their eager curiosity, and foolish anxiety to penetrate into any supposed mystery, and lastly an occasional appearance of indelicacy when they have not yet received the secret warnings of that instinctive modesty which accompanies their approach towards womanhood.

Most of these faults are of long standing, and may be traced to an early self-conceit, which has been too much excited. And to prevent this propensity from gathering additional strength by being exercised in active life, a girl, though allowed to be a silent spectator of all the domestic arrangements, should never be entrusted *with any authority*, or superintendence in house-

hold affairs, until she has acquired a certain amount of experience.

It may happen that even whilst still young she may be able occasionally to give her mother some useful information. Her mind being less absorbed with a variety of cares, more alive and curious, she may perhaps discover some hitherto undetected abuses. We may then take advantage of her zeal, but must be careful not to encourage a spirit of *tale-bearing*. It is of infinitely more importance that her moral character should be cultivated, than that she should prove a useful superintendent. Do not therefore praise her sagacity; tell her that you will examine into the affair; but do not think it necessary to make her acquainted with the result of your examination. Should you find it desirable to reprove, or even to dismiss a servant, let not the humiliation of a fellow creature—especially if a woman—become a matter of exultation to your daughter.

As children grow older it is not always an easy task to establish the connexion between them and our domestics on a proper footing. Servants who have for a length of time had the charge of them, and consequently felt themselves their superiors, perceive with regret that the time has arrived when a change of situation must take place, and the inequality of their mutual conditions must be acknowledged. Unless

the mother interest herself in the moral welfare of both parties, it is to be feared that pride, and at least apparent ingratitude, may be displayed by her daughter, and mortification and ill-humour by the nurse. During this period of transition from one age to another it is particularly desirable that the intercourse between them should be as much as possible suspended, and that girls should be accustomed to do every thing they can for themselves. This may easily be managed by a mother ; and if the nurse and her former charge should each feel grieved by this arrangement, a more pleasing connexion would, from this very feeling, be soon established between them. Surely we are bound by every motive of Christian charity to treat with kindness and consideration the feelings of these unenlightened but affectionate attendants, whose devoted attachment is sometimes unacknowledged, and sometimes, with inexcusable levity, unheeded.

Besides, it is very desirable that girls should be rendered as much as possible physically independent. No slavery is so annoying as that which arises from our dependence on others for personal assistance. How many little visits to friends, how many journeys, — rendered so delightful in the present age by the increased facilities of travelling, — must be given up by those who cannot move without a

train of servants! Exposed, too, as we all are, to reverses of fortune, would it not be wise to prepare ourselves for them by throwing off this self-imposed yoke?

Girls may at first be entrusted with such household cares as demand little assistance from others. Those required by an attention to their own personal appearance are the better understood, from their harmonizing with their desire to bestow an air of elegance on every thing with which they are concerned. It is, moreover, perfectly natural that they should wish to be well dressed.

In addition to that neatness and cleanliness which are absolutely indispensable, it is extremely desirable that their external appearance should be pleasing, and that while a degree of consistency should exist between their dress and their figure, too much attention should not be bestowed upon them. Let us begin by entrusting to them the care of decorating our apartments, and arranging flowers in a vase, or various little articles of ornamental furniture. Innumerable opportunities will arise for teaching them to view objects with the eye of an artist, and their taste for the beautiful will thus be cultivated, unmixed with any personal feeling. Should they on any future occasion be told that they are not becomingly dressed, the reproach will be felt as referring

not to their pretensions as women, but to their taste as artists.

If there be any thing which it seems desirable for a girl to learn from servants, no unpleasant collision necessarily takes place; she will be taught by them how to perform certain domestic operations, and her first awkward attempts will be the cause of amusement to all parties. Generally speaking, a manner which is lively without being familiar, gains the affection of servants; and if this happy medium be once attained, the same pleasing feelings may be continued throughout life. In countries where the prejudices of birth are not too powerful, a principle of equality always exists amongst women; the virtuous amongst them feel themselves sisters, much more than men ever feel themselves brothers; a conventional subordination leaves their natural relations inviolate.

Physical duties, whether relating to economy or beauty, have a powerful effect in unfolding the intellect. They promote a precocious, but transient developement; and the very progress which they favour may, unless carefully watched, tend to retard advancement in other respects. It is not very easy, says M. Guizot, to prevent a girl from being more interested in the success of a sweetmeat than in any of her lessons. The case is the same with a piece of em-

broidery, — the making a purchase ; in short, with any thing which produces a present visible result. It may be said that this clearly shows what is the true vocation of woman ; and, no doubt, it is an indication of one part of her vocation : but let us not take the part for the whole.

Suppose a traveller passing through a village should step into a common-looking shop to ask for information. He finds there a girl of ten or eleven years old left in charge of the concern, to whom he no sooner addresses himself than she at once understands what he wants, and either can tell him how to procure it, or can suggest a substitute. She knows the name and occupation of all the neighbours, and offers to obtain their assistance for him ; in short, she surprises him by the readiness and correctness of her replies, and he feels that if he had applied to a girl of the same age whose parents were in easier circumstances, and had been at great expense in procuring masters for her, she would have been quite at a loss, would not have comprehended any thing of the matter, and would have been occupied only with her own personal feelings, and with the opinion which might be formed of her by the stranger. As regards intelligence and understanding, there can be no doubt of the superiority of the villager. But let the traveller see her again

after the lapse of five or six years, and he will find that she has not advanced a single step; the daily return of the same occupations will have brought only the return of the same ideas, and will have left a perceptible void in her mind. But this will not be the case with young persons of a different rank.

When girls are to be introduced to a knowledge of society, and of the different relations of human existence, it becomes still more difficult to ascertain what share they should be allowed to take in the interests of real life; and it is seldom that faults, of one kind or another, are not committed. In large towns, and in the houses of the more opulent, owing to the constant succession of lessons, and to the real inconvenience which would arise from admitting the pupils to a premature participation in the tastes of a frivolous world, they are kept aloof from every thing, and left to struggle with their consequent feelings of envy and regret. But in families of lower rank, on the other hand, the anxiety of the mother to derive some advantage from her daughter, to bring her forward and make her useful, causes her to cut short the occupations of childhood; and, by her very eagerness to procure friends and protectors for her, she deprives her of the power of hereafter acquiring them by her own merit. *Instructing her only in externals, — in the*

every-day business of life, — she too often condemns her to an irremediable mediocrity. Young persons of this description, whose manners are completely formed at fifteen, who believe that they say just what ought to be said, and know every thing that is necessary, have no suspicion of their real mental poverty; their minds are finished off, to expand no further.

It is, however, an essential and pleasing duty to strengthen the bonds of affection between a young girl and the different members of her family. From being accustomed to consider the various degrees of attention and deference which should characterise her intercourse with them, she acquires that delicate tact — one of the most precious endowments of her sex — which will enable her to appreciate the characters of her different connections, to estimate the advantages or disadvantages of an intimacy with them, and to judge of the particular sort of attention required by their sex or age. In all these respects the superiority of private education is incontestable.

Social life in general affords continual opportunities for exercising this tact. Of course it is not to be supposed that a girl should, before the age of fifteen, be introduced into what is called the world; but, in most families, the several members meet together in an evening,

and are often joined at such times by their various friends; and it is only natural and pleasant to see our daughter forming one of the party round the tea-table and working table. Though still so young, it is right that she should feel herself as a part belonging to the whole, and that she should take an interest in all the concerns, whether moral or physical, of the household.

Nor would it be our wish to subject her to a dull silence when in society. Of course the slightest symptom of vanity, an abrupt or decided manner of speaking, or a fondness for idle gossip, will be at once checked by her mother: but as long as her attention is bestowed on others, and not on herself, we see no reason why her unassuming remarks should be repressed.

The state of nonentity to which children are often condemned is frequently disadvantageous to them. In the first place, it leads people to forget their presence, and to say many things before them which it would be much better for them not to hear: and, in addition to this, the weariness experienced by the children themselves tends to generate ill-nature, and a taste for amusing themselves by indulging in censoriousness and mischievous curiosity. But, when allowed to take a share in the conversation, however trifling it may be, they feel a desire to

be themselves approved, and are more indulgent to others. At all events, they should always be disposed to answer, openly and pleasantly, any questions which may be addressed to them. There will be the least awkwardness, and the least dread of the opinion of others, where there is the least self-conceit.

We should regard it as an advantage to girls that these evening family meetings should occasionally be joined by some of their brothers' friends, youths about their own age. Before the time arrives when every thing appears of importance, when the most trifling words uttered by young men are too apt to excite innumerable hopes or fears, it seems to us particularly desirable that girls should have been accustomed to associate with them quietly, and to consider them as reasonable beings with whom they might converse on various subjects, whether grave or gay, without any feeling of restraint. In fact, we have observed that where such has been the case, young women have been more natural, more pleasing, and even more correct in their manner towards the other sex, than when they have been entirely debarred from their society. However interesting in a romance the emotions, the confusion, the blushes with which a young woman is supposed to be overwhelmed on being introduced

to a young man, these are far from being auspicious omens in real life.

No doubt faults will occasionally be committed in these family parties, which would perhaps have been avoided by a system of total seclusion. But these faults will afford an opportunity of offering suggestions and advice. Should they spring from the heart, the shoots which they have thrown out will enable us to discover their roots; and with respect to such as arise from extreme unconsciousness, let us not, by ascribing undue importance to these, shed premature light on that unconsciousness. We must indeed prevent their recurrence; but we must do this without exciting alarm, or suffusing the youthful countenance with blushes. By referring to the numerous laws imposed on us by the customs of society, we shall have no difficulty in assigning a motive for our prohibitions. That instinctive dread which a woman feels even of knowing what it is that she fears, will be sufficiently excited by the simple words, "a young person who has been well brought up should not do, or say, so and so."

Generally speaking, the less importance we attach to the trifling errors, or the equally trifling success, which may arise from their being allowed to join in such domestic society, the less will the imagination of girls be occupied by the thoughts of it; and this is what

we should particularly desire. Both as children and as women they are but too apt to suffer themselves to be absorbed by a single object ; and this is especially undesirable at the age which we are now considering. Unless we are careful to employ their active powers during the day in serious occupations, their minds will be entirely engrossed by the expected party in the evening, particularly if they hope for the society of some young people of their own age, in which case their heads may be filled with ideas of friendship and intimacy, which call for the earnest attention of a mother.

We might here notice those childish friendships from which so much happiness often arises. Happy indeed is that daughter whose mother encourages the formation of these bonds, and entertains a hope of their ripening hereafter into lasting and devoted attachment. We are persuaded that in their mutual affection women might find a comfort of which many of them have hardly any idea ; and when the recollection of this affection can be carried back into childhood, it diffuses a soothing pleasure, and even a tinge of gaiety, over their latter days, which sorrow itself cannot entirely destroy. On this subject, however, from the difference of circumstances, society, and country, it is impossible for us to give any more definite advice than that our daughters should not, on

slight grounds, be deprived of the chance of so much happiness; and yet that we must be ever on our guard against intimacies which may be fraught with danger.

Some of those occupations which must hereafter form part of the duty of a woman may perhaps be assigned to her even at this early age; but we should not insist on this; for such occupations, though occasionally deemed necessary, are frequently premature. Let her mind, as she advances towards womanhood, expand itself tranquilly in the calm atmosphere of study, without becoming too soon engrossed by the interests of life. The predominant feeling in her breast, as her figure becomes more womanly, and she begins to attract attention, should be, that the period is arriving when she must take upon herself the charge of that second education on which the value of her moral character will depend, and must put forth all her strength, and make increasing efforts, to approach that perfection which is her object.

Our vocation as human beings, even to the most advanced age, consists of two parts; the practice of our relative duties, and that improvement of our intellectual and moral faculties which will enable us to perform these duties satisfactorily. We must be continually occupied both in forming the instrument, and

making 'use of it ; but during youth, and indeed up to the marriageable age, the formation of it is of the most importance to a woman ; and it is in this point of view that the practice of the common duties of life becomes so useful to her. Restricted as she is in the exercise of her active powers, her influence on others must of necessity be very much confined. Her great duty consists in obeying God, and consequently in following out the designs of her parents, who are his representatives.

The most rational wish that can be formed, either as respects women themselves, or their influence on society, would seem to be, that the years which intervene between childhood and womanhood should be profitably employed. During this period, which, though short, is free from any absorbing cares, the parental authority, without having lost its power, is exercised on reasonable beings ; and this age, though it may produce some dangerous inclinations, is also fruitful in noble resolutions, and may inspire the youthful mind with a generous ambition and a disinterested zeal. But in order that her aspirations after virtue may remain pure,—may be steady in their effects, prudently expressed, and not easily discouraged by obstacles, we must lead our pupil to recur constantly to the source of all perfection. The *state of the heart*,—the secret springs of action,

—form the essential point in order to insure success. And as religion alone possesses the double power of at once ameliorating the heart and regulating the conduct, we would recommend that the important task of education during this period of youth should commence with the regular study of religion.

BOOK II.

PERIOD OF YOUTH.

CHAPTER I.

SIXTEENTH YEAR. — ADMISSION TO THE LORD'S SUPPER.

ACCORDING to the regulations of our Reformed Church, children are not admitted either to the confirmation of the baptismal vows, or to a participation in the Lord's Supper. It is considered right that their will should have become in some degree enlightened before they are called upon to ratify an engagement entered into in their name, but without their knowledge; and that they should have learnt to adore and know God (as far as the inadequacy of our nature will allow) before they are admitted to his Holy Table.

These two acts of devotion are therefore preceded by a course of religious instruction, as complete as circumstances will permit; and it is only after a strict examination into the belief and dispositions of the catechumens that they are received into the bosom of the church,

and allowed to devote themselves, publicly and solemnly, to the service of God.

This custom is, in our opinion, very judicious; and in all Christian countries, however they may differ in their forms of public worship, it would seem very desirable that the important transition from childhood to youth should be particularly marked by a conscientious study of religion. During this period a developement is taking place, which, though not depending on our efforts, may, by our attention, receive a salutary direction. The soul then begins to be conscious of its own existence, and this consciousness, becoming every day stronger and more profound, discovers to the youthful mind an unknown world; a world which appears more beautiful, more highly coloured, and more alluring, from being viewed through a sort of magic glass. Hitherto the intellect had been acquiring strength, the affections and the moral feelings had been expanding, but existence had been almost entirely external. Now, however, a change is taking place, which, though too gradual to be perceived by girls themselves, must be perceptible to every attentive observer. Nothing is completely new to them; their minds may be occupied by the same objects, the same pictures may be presented to their imaginations, but the effect produced by them is greatly increased. Words too seem more

full of meaning, and excite more lively emotion. Expressions which formerly would have been uttered without a thought are now arrested on their lips, and often become less energetic as their feelings become more so. Reserve and modesty — the inseparable companions of true dignity — are thus gradually formed; what was at first only the effect of education becomes natural, and the ideal woman is insensibly realized.

But that power of loving and admiring which now manifests itself, even to excess, constitutes at once the charm and the danger of this new state of mind. A deeper impression is produced by the magnificence of creation, and a more lively sympathy experienced in the happiness and distresses of others. All the bonds of affection are drawn closer; the names of daughter, sister, or friend, become more dear, and devotion to others seems almost a necessary feeling.

Do not these things speak to us in sufficiently plain language? Do we not feel that our great aim should be to direct this increased energy towards God, and thus furnish with an object this new craving after something to admire and to love? And, indeed, is there any other object capable of satisfying this desire? Any other deserving of that constant devotedness which seems almost necessary to a woman's happiness? Any other of which she can never be deprived,

either by indifference or death, which will always guide her in the path of duty, and bestow a feeling of holiness on that youthful delight with which the pleasures of this life are enjoyed, when the soul has not yet learnt to anticipate those of Heaven?

It must, however, be allowed, that the development of which we have been speaking is not always very perceptible: sometimes nature appears to make no efforts at all; and at others her feeble efforts are suppressed by a dry and cold education, or by too great an accumulation of lessons. This may not always prove an evil; there is, however, at any rate, great danger not only of a moral stagnation being produced, instead of that continual advancement which ought to take place, but of such frigid characters becoming occupied only with the frivolous pleasures of the world.

On the other hand, the danger arising from extreme sensibility is universally acknowledged, and any excess of enthusiasm should, on this account, be carefully avoided. Nor is this a difficult task at an age when every thing is characterised by mutability. The impressions of youth are transient; all their pictures are still coloured with the gay tints of childhood; and it seems particularly desirable that these tints should, if possible, continue to be diffused over their unoccupied hours, and over those allotted

to bodily or mental recreations. We do not wish the year which is more especially devoted to religious instruction, to form a gloomy contrast with those preceding and following it ; nor do we at all object to many of the plans which we are now recommending being transferred to a later period.

But in order to afford the mind leisure for self-examination at its entrance on a new career, would it not seem desirable that parents should suspend, or at any rate slacken, for a time, such educational exercises as must naturally have a mechanical tendency ? Without permitting the mind to be relaxed by a spirit of indifference or carelessness, sufficient time must be allotted for religious instruction, and some moments set apart for meditation. Should the disposition of our pupil be either too indolent, or too volatile to profit by such meditation, we must endeavour, as much as possible, to lead her to serious thoughts by means of conversation.

That rapid growth which generally takes place in girls about the age of fifteen or sixteen is often accompanied by a proportionate failure of strength. Hence peculiar attention and management are required at this period. It is absolutely necessary to their health that a large portion of their time should be spent in the open air, and in such bodily exercises as are suited to their physical condition ; and no men-

tal application of any long continuance should be exacted. Some of the lighter branches of study which have already been mentioned may serve to employ the mind without fatiguing it, and at the same time to direct its faculties towards that religious developement which is our great object.

In accordance with these views, we would recommend that a course of reading, explanatory of the general laws of the universe, be substituted for more abstruse studies. Works of this kind will serve to enlarge the views of our pupil, and to point out to her the same Almighty Lawgiver who has laid the foundations of moral order, as also the Creator of physical order. Her study of past ages may be continued by means of some good ecclesiastical history ; whilst her imagination may be delighted, and her mind adorned, by every thing most beautiful in devotional poetry and literature, whether in her own language, or in any other with which she has become acquainted.

All these, however, must be considered only as auxiliaries ; we must not be led by them to neglect the essential point. As regards direct religious instruction, we should advise a mother to be present when it is given, but not to be herself the instructor. A deeper impression will be produced if, for this purpose, a more solemn voice be heard,—a voice, too, which has not

been associated with the minor details of education. A minister of religion will speak with authority ; but the more this is the case, the more careful should we be in our choice of a teacher to whom a matter of so much importance is to be entrusted. We must recollect that the pupil is a young girl,—an excitable being,—easily captivated either by the senses or the imagination. We must endeavour to withdraw her mind from this kind of distraction, and to prevent the purity of her religious feelings from being alloyed either by any thing painful, or any thing particularly attractive. Divine truth should be imparted without the slightest wish either to augment, or diminish its beauty ; man should have as little to do with it as possible.

The paramount consideration of her instructor will be to contemplate his pupil as an immortal being ; but the nature of his lessons will in some degree be influenced by a regard to her sex. Viewing her as a future mother, he will consider her as destined to transmit the blessings of Christianity to her own children, or to those of the poor ; at all events, to simple and teachable minds. He will therefore present religion to her in all its simplicity ; he will require, not so much any great effort of the understanding, as a sincere and lively devotion, a constant desire to draw near unto God, and to obey his holy will. His lessons will not

consist in refuting objections, for he will consider that he shall most effectually guard against the entrance of error, particularly with women, by leading them to understand and love the truth ; and he will therefore, with the deepest feeling of reverence, successively explain the sublime truths of Christianity.

Thus far the young pupil can have no difficulty in understanding what is taught her ; she may engage to use her utmost efforts and zeal in order to profit by the instruction she has received ; such pious resolutions accord well with the youthful mind. But how little is she yet able to conceive the effect of the energy, or to sound the depth of the designs of the Almighty !

A Christian teacher does not conceal from himself that the precious germ which he is so anxious to bring to maturity requires for its growth both the direct Divine agency, and its indirect influence through the circumstances of life. His pupil comprehends to a certain extent the instruction she has received, and is anxious to preserve it inviolate, as a precious and sacred treasure ; but she has not yet penetrated the whole depth of its meaning, and is not aware of all the uses to which it may be applied.

Hence it is that the soothing pleasure of filial obedience, confidence in God, and the hope of his support, are the feelings which she best

understands: she is, however, perfectly capable of sincere and even fervent prayer; and thus possesses the means of acquiring every thing. Filled with gratitude for all the mercies by which her childhood has been distinguished, she feels that she can prove her gratitude only by her good conduct — by a constant desire to correct her faults; and her prayer to God is, that she may be enlightened and strengthened by the assistance of the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ, her Saviour and Mediator, is the particular object of her devotion; and though not yet able fully to appreciate all that is included in the name of Saviour, she delights to call him by this name. Such is, for the present, her religion, and such are the ideas and impressions which, in proportion as they acquire a more determined character, will exercise the most favourable influence on her whole life.

One thing, however, is still wanting in the Christianity of a youthful mind, even when faith and love are already there; and this is, an irresistible feeling of necessity. The pupil readily adopts revealed truths, and is even attached to them; but she does not consider them as the vital conditions of regeneration, nor, indeed, is the full meaning of the term regeneration understood by her.

Hence it is that the earliest fact which has been revealed concerning the soul, — the fall of

man, — is not yet viewed by her as the foundation even of Christianity itself; nor does she yet see in this belief the source of the most powerful effects of religion. She speaks openly and earnestly of the corruption of human nature, but in reality she considers it only as a little weakness. She knows that she has frequently transgressed, and failed in keeping her good resolutions; but these faults appear to her accidental, and not inherent; they have been pardoned by her parents, and she concludes they are passed over both by them, and by God. She has not yet experienced any permanent disposition which required to be entirely subdued; she has not yet *resisted sin, even unto blood*.

This severe struggle must have been long, and very long sustained, before we acknowledge ourselves vanquished. We must call to mind how often we have resisted the warning of conscience; and that even when we have avoided any very serious fault, we have not destroyed the seeds of evil, inasmuch as we have felt the temptation to sin. Then it is that whatever may be the fatal inclination which rules in our hearts, whether it take the form of *moral*, or of *physical* indulgence, we at once recognize in it the great enemy which alienates us from God — selfishness.

Religion, in all its depth, is a matter of experience; the path marked out for it is the path

of life ; of a life full of efforts and struggles to attain unto God, with such helps as He himself affords us. And when we find that this aid, as far at least as our imperfect nature permits its use, does not preserve us from frequent relapses, we experience the comfort of being able to cast ourselves on a Redeemer ; we can only feel re-assured by the idea of an immense expiation for sin, and must fly to the Saviour for refuge.

Together with the mystery of redemption, that of the secret working of the Holy Spirit in our hearts is revealed to us more distinctly. And surely the existence of this influence will not be denied ? Can we conceive that God, being a Spirit, should not have communion with our souls ? On the contrary, He so works upon them that no other miracle is required, though his moral agency is concealed beneath the veil of human faculties, just as He conceals Himself in creation beneath the veil of second causes.

Our young pupil will therefore believe in the secret influence of God, and will find consolation and pleasure in the idea ; but it will be rather an object of her supplication, than a subject of thanksgiving ; she hopes for it, but has not yet experienced it. Time has not yet been afforded her ; earthly affections have not yet been felt by her with that energy which

accelerates intellectual developement. Sorrow, that sorrow which is so beneficial, which prostrates us at the feet of our Saviour, is, as yet, unknown to her; nor has she learnt, from the rupture of her dearest earthly ties, to form for the future only such as are eternal.

In all these different vicissitudes it is God who speaks, God who at last makes his voice heard. Then it is that her illusions both as to herself and others are dispelled; that she is enabled to estimate more correctly that love of what is good by which she believes herself animated; and that she begins to view with distrust the motives of even her virtuous actions. Then only it is that regeneration takes place, and that she becomes really weaned from the pleasures of this life. In the first impulse of her zeal, she would willingly have renounced the world, before she knew what it was that she was giving up. However sincere might be her wish to make this sacrifice, she could have offered to God only a heart unacquainted with itself. We must both have loved much, and suffered much in this world, before we are able to acknowledge that "God is all in all."

Our pupil has not yet reached this point; yet the feelings with which she is animated are in themselves excellent, and she may at times be too much allured by their charms.

She overrates the value of her pious emotions, and is too easily satisfied with a sort of poetical devotion. It seems to her that this feeling must be as heavenly and sublime as it is pure; but in its present evanescent and volatile state it may easily be carried away by the gales of life, and the emotions of piety superseded by others of a very different nature. Religion must be, as it were, incorporated into our very existence; it must be refined by every circumstance of our life, by our faults, our errors, our griefs, in order that it may become — not, we must acknowledge, completely purified, — but incorruptible; proof both against time, and the greatest sufferings time can bring.

Meanwhile the promises of Christianity have been declared to our pupil, and, the precious convictions of divine truth having been already implanted in her heart, the fruits are secretly ripening there, and she will hold *the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.*

Morality is also now presented to her in a completely religious point of view; that is to say, entirely independent of all considerations either of personal interest, or of the conventional rules of society. Arising out of the same principle as religious worship — the love of God — her moral feelings render every action of her life a species of devotion. Her object is to *participate* as much as possible with

the Divine nature, by loving all the creatures of God, and observing towards them the holy precepts of the Gospel: "If ye keep my commandments," said our Saviour, "ye will abide in my love." Here we do indeed behold the whole religion of Christ, both as regards its divine source, and its effects on human beings.

The necessary instruction having been given, the pupil must undergo the examination which is to qualify her for partaking of the Lord's Supper. This examination, how much soever it may have been previously dreaded, will be passed through with great tranquillity. Her inward dispositions are more the subject of investigation than her mental acquirements; and the minister of religion, upon whom the duty of making these investigations devolves, will not conclude without having addressed to her the most heart-searching exhortations.

CHAPTER II.

MORAL AND INTELLECTUAL OCCUPATIONS BETWEEN
SIXTEEN AND EIGHTEEN.

IF we consider attentively the individuals who compose the mass of what are called good people, they may be divided into two distinct classes; those who, having first ascertained that there is nothing unlawful in their inclinations, follow them without any scruple; and those who, listening to the dictates of conscience, believe that they are sent here on an important mission.

The actions of persons in both these classes may indeed sometimes appear similar, and may equally obtain the censure or the applause of superficial observers; but where motives are so different, they must in the end display themselves in conduct.

Hence those whose great object is their own welfare or pleasure, are seldom acquainted with the true state of their souls. Satisfied to have avoided any very great or apparent faults they take no interest in the perfecting of their character. Morality becomes with them a mere inactive stationary principle; they do

not wish either to lose the esteem of their fellow-creatures, or by any act of imprudence to lay the foundation of future regret ; but a principle naturally inactive and stationary is constantly in danger of falling back, from the very circumstance of its making no efforts to advance.

Unluckily, however, women are even more disposed than men to rest on such a principle. Confined to the paternal roof during early youth, carefully preserved from every corrupting influence, they are considered as entirely pure, as possessed of every good quality, and are constantly exhorted to remain what they now are. The natural effect of such exhortations is to inspire them with too high an opinion of themselves. Superficial knowledge and common-place virtues are all that are generally required of them, and therefore they easily excuse themselves from making any great exertions, and in every thing which can escape notice are content with mediocrity.

No doubt at the solemn moment when a young girl is publicly received as a member of the church she forms many good resolutions. But in what light does she view her new situation ? Too often merely as an emancipation from a state of humiliating subjection. It seems to her that she is entering on a more interesting career, — on a more eventful and

exciting period of her life. The future with its innumerable illusions seduces her enchanted imagination.

Henceforward her thoughts take a new direction ; she supposes herself to have arrived at the most attractive age. She pictures to herself a very proper kind of life ; — a sort of ground-work of pleasing colours, relieved by a few duties which serve only to add to its beauty. Various scenes are represented in her imagination ; but in all she herself appears, clothed in an elegant and becoming costume, followed by unseen looks, which sympathize in her feelings, and encourage her by the interest they evince. As all her views of the future terminate in marriage, she is constantly looking forward to this event ; she knows, indeed, that she is at present much too young ; the serious idea of such a connection would even alarm her ; but the forerunners of it, — the anticipations of an engagement, — these cannot fail to charm her imagination.

A girl with such dispositions is impatient to strip off the livery of childhood, and to give up all her former occupations. The relation in which she stands to her parents seems changed, and she even wonders that obedience should ever have been required from her. She professes a great respect for her mother's advice, but surely " it is time that she should learn to

act for herself; is she not well acquainted with her duties? Certain advantages are still, no doubt, wanting; her talents may be farther improved, her literary acquirements augmented; but as to any thing else, having learnt a little of every thing, she knows all that is necessary for a woman, and to know more would only savour of pedantry."

But the precious season of youth is altogether lost by a girl who thus reasons; she passes at once from a child to a young woman; — a common-place and presumptuous young woman, destitute alike of wisdom and knowledge.

Such, however, is not the disposition of the pupil whom we delight in picturing to ourselves; her views do not extend so far. The past appears to her in its proper light; in looking back on her childhood she perceives that whatever might be her intentions, her own gratification was her great object. She feels that she had been more occupied with the impression she should make on her parents, than with their real happiness; more anxious to *obtain* than to *deserve* their approbation; and in reviewing her conduct she discovers, not only that she had committed various faults, but that, even when making her most virtuous efforts, her attention had been occupied more by her actions than by the feelings which

prompted them. She hopes that what is past is pardoned both by her earthly parents and her Heavenly Father; the essential point now is to make amends for her former conduct, and to lay aside the inconsiderate selfishness of childhood.

Being convinced that the only real development of the heart and mind must be effected by that second education which we give to ourselves, her great anxiety is to take advantage of the short time which may be allowed for her advancement in every species of knowledge, and she feels happy that she can hope for the assistance of her parents in this undertaking. She has no wish to be completely independent; on the contrary, it is a relief to her mind that she is not obliged to take upon herself the entire direction of her conduct; she looks forward with pleasure to the enjoyment of a few years of tranquillity; — a few years devoted to self-instruction, to reflection, and to the observation of life as a mere spectator; — a few years during which she will be called upon to practise certain duties, without incurring the whole responsibility of choice.

Her first care will, no doubt, be the regulation of that portion of time which is to be devoted to religious duties. Considering it of the highest importance to preserve carefully the pious impressions she has received, and

aware of her own volatile disposition, she will fix on certain hours for holding communion with God. All her devotional habits will be strictly maintained; and her solitary noontide worship will have a soothing tendency on her slight mental agitations. Prayer and reflection will restore her tranquillity: her progress in virtue will be promoted both by the study of the Holy Scriptures, and by the scrupulous examination of her own heart. These seasons of meditation will be known only to God and herself; and though obliged occasionally to forego them, it will only be to obey the call of some more indispensable duty.

It would be a great advantage to a girl of this age if she could herself have a pupil to whom she might impart the religious instruction she has received; and it would be very desirable that this pupil should, if possible, be one of her own family. That mutual affection, and those general habits of gentleness and consideration which reign in some happy families, where instruction has been given and received by brothers and sisters, afford the strongest proof of the excellence of the system there adopted. But in such cases it is absolutely necessary that the youthful teachers should be considerably older than their pupils, and should previously have inspired them with a certain degree of respect, otherwise not only much

time will be wasted, but many occasions of dispute will arise, which must be injurious to the character.

Except, therefore, under very favourable circumstances, it is better to choose some poor child as our pupil: pupil. This would at the same time be a work of charity, and one, too, which might perhaps not be accomplished in any other way. For even supposing this child to have received some religious instruction at school, this instruction is often so obscure, the language of the catechisms generally made use of is so little understood, the cultivation of devotional feelings so entirely neglected, that there is ample employment left for the young teacher. And can she have a more pleasing task than that of inspiring a child with the love of God, and bringing within the reach of an almost uncultivated capacity that Gospel which was preached to the poor? Can any thing be more likely to impress Christian principles and their important results still more deeply on her own heart? Considered, too, in another point of view, this practice in the art of teaching would be the best possible preparation for the probable future vocation of women; we are thus forming a future mother, without raising hopes which may prove only illusory.

The continuance of a religious education may

by such means be secured ; but our pupil is well aware that cultivation of another kind is also necessary. She has been long flattered with the idea, that when she should have attained a certain point in her intellectual education she might follow her particular inclination in the choice of her occupations ; but she has sense enough to perceive that this time has not yet arrived. She must still apply diligently to her studies ; she must endeavour to dispel the mists of ignorance by which her moral vision is yet obscured, and to arrange and connect her scattered ideas. In short, she must repair her education, even from its very foundations.

But how is this to be done ?

If she have no one to direct and assist her, some of those abridged encyclopædias, the employment of which at an earlier age we deprecated as useless, might now be advantageously put into her hands. Not that she would gain from them much real science, but she would there learn what it is of which she is ignorant. Any point of history or geography, or any other necessary information which could not be acquired from the resources of her own mind, must be studied in such works as treat on these subjects ; for she would not, we trust, rest satisfied with the superficial information obtained from dictionaries.

But surely at this age, when the intellect is so full of vigour, and when the first and more laborious part of education is already accomplished, a father must delight in cultivating his daughter's understanding. Every man who has received even the most common-place education is far superior in intellectual acquirements to a girl of sixteen. He has more sense, more solidity of character ; what he does know he knows thoroughly, and he is not to be satisfied with mere words. If he would devote some time, were it only ten minutes a day, to his daughter, would encourage her in her studies, recommend particular books for her perusal, and examine her in them after she has read them, explaining any difficulties she may have met with, it is impossible to describe what a stimulus would thus be given to her young mind. It is so pleasant and so flattering to be the object of such interest to a father ; to see that he thinks it worth while to interrupt his own occupations on our account, and acknowledges our intellect as akin to his own, that we are naturally led to make the most strenuous exertions in order to please him. And how interesting it must be for a father to form such a bond of union, and to create a companion for himself in his daughter ! What a resource will their affectionate and serious conversations on subjects of mutual interest form for his old age !

Perhaps the indifference generally shown by fathers as to the intellectual progress of their daughters arises from their eager and anxious solicitude concerning that of their sons. All their ambitious hopes are centered on the young man ; he is the heir of their name, their fortune, their reputation ; their wishes for his success are often so intense as to become a source of pain. But the greater their anxiety concerning their sons, the less do they show about their daughters. Having so much inquietude elsewhere, here they seek nothing but amusement : whilst children they treat them as playthings ; all their little artifices and attempts at rebellion are passed over, or laughed at : even the effect of a maternal reproof is sometimes destroyed by a joke from the father ; it never seems to enter their heads that they are educating a moral being. But as soon as the charms of infancy disappear, and the troubles of lessons begin, they neglect their little playfellows, wonder at the pains that are taken with them, and despise their uncultivated talents and rudiments of knowledge. Nothing seems to them of much importance in a woman, except that she should conduct herself with propriety, and be lady-like and graceful. When, however, a few more years have passed away, and the young woman appears in all her youthful charms, they are again delighted with their

daughters. Proud of their talents, their understanding, their goodness, they see nothing but what is agreeable, and overlook all faults. But surely they do not thus fulfil their true duties as fathers? Are they aware that in proportion to their ability they are responsible, both here and hereafter, for the sacred trust reposed in them? Yet it is not that they do not love their daughters; their affection for them is strong; perhaps even stronger than what they feel for their sons; but they take no interest in the welfare of their souls. So true is it, that unless affection be hallowed by a strict feeling of duty, it may indeed be sincere and ardent, but will too often be degraded into an unworthy selfishness.

There are certain branches of knowledge which a girl would herself perhaps hardly think of acquiring, which she would nevertheless often find extremely useful. Amongst these may be mentioned an acquaintance with what may be called the *language of accounts*, in which many terms are used in a totally different sense from their ordinary meaning, thus producing a confusion to most women quite inexplicable. For want of this knowledge — in itself easily acquired — they remain ignorant of their own affairs, at the mercy of every speculator, and in many cases unable to

assist their husbands or children in their difficulties.

In addition to those household cares with which they may have been entrusted, I would also have girls instructed in some of the general principles of domestic economy. It is of the greatest importance that they should have correct ideas as to the regulation and due proportion of the different expenses of a family. They would thus learn to consider the details in their relation to the whole expenditure, and would acquire rational views on many points connected with them.

In the last place it seems very desirable that all women should possess a certain amount of knowledge as to the management of the health; a knowledge so useful to the mother of a family, to the mistress of a household, and to all who interest themselves in the welfare of the poor, that there seems little need to dwell on the subject.

Such are the objects with which, in addition to the cultivation of their talents, and the continuation of all unfinished studies, the period of youth should be occupied. Can we doubt that such a period, so occupied, must tend to raise the moral character of our pupil? To those involuntary aspirations after virtue which are felt by all noble minds, will be added a determination to use every effort for her own im-

provement. No doubt obstacles to this improvement will always exist ; every different path will have its peculiar difficulties ; they will be found in the contradictory inclinations of the human heart, and in the excitable organization of woman. The impulses of the most generous dispositions must be regulated by a strong will, always on its guard, or we cannot hope for any permanent good. In fact, the efforts made by a young girl herself to improve her intellectual education, constitute the most natural exercise of her will. It is hardly possible at present for her to perform any extrinsic services ; every thing points out that her true business is with her own character. Her power of acting is restricted in various ways ; by the customs of society, the state of dependence in which she lives, and her limited pecuniary resources. Besides, every situation is occupied ; her mother, still in the prime of life, is not likely to resign her authority ; in every decision which has to be made, in the management of the other children, even in works of charity, the daughter is seldom more than a spectator ; she never feels herself necessary.

But this feeling of being necessary is the only one which imparts interest to human actions, and invigorates the character. It invests with equal dignity occupations the most different ; often bestowing a more elevated

existence on the daughter of poor parents, who follows an apparently mean vocation, than on her richer and more elegant coeval, who passes her time either in entire idleness, or in the most trifling employment.

It is not always an easy task to find really useful occupation for young persons who have just been emancipated from the school-room. The eldest daughter may, indeed, sometimes assist her mother; but what are the younger to do? Too often a sort of factitious life is arranged for them; feigned duties are created; they are sent to nurse friends who are not ill, or to console those who are not in distress. A continual exchange of visits takes place; and hence so much tattling and gossip, and such habits of idleness arise. Unless they are always talking they are a prey to listlessness, and solitude becomes at last insupportable to them.

The evil effect of such habits is often felt throughout the whole of life. A young wife, who has been brought up in a numerous family, is frequently overwhelmed by melancholy on being transported to a solitary country-house, with no other companion than her husband, who of course cannot be always at her side. This situation, however common, is not unattended with danger.

It seems to us that one object in education should be to accustom a girl to be occasionally

satisfied with her own company for some hours. Her understanding is matured by solitude ; she learns to value the intellectual cultivation she has received, and to consider her studies, and the exercise of her talents, not merely as a continuation of the tasks of childhood, but as resources for life. An incessant loquacity, on the contrary, enervates the moral existence, and renders all active exertion more difficult.

Some faults may perhaps be peculiar to particular countries ; but in all we believe that the task of moral and intellectual education is too soon considered as accomplished. Habits of idleness and indolence, along with that selfishness by which they are generally accompanied, are often seen in girls from whom better things might have been hoped. Nothing, however, is yet absolutely lost. A torpid mind may be roused by the feelings of even common life ; and in higher regions are more vivifying sources ; “ the wind bloweth where it listeth,” and the sleeping embers are rekindled.

CHAPTER III.

SAME PERIOD CONTINUED. — SOCIAL LIFE.

IT is an anxious moment for a mother when, after a period of absence, or seclusion, she first introduces her daughter, now verging on womanhood, to a circle of friends. She feels that all eyes are upon her child, who is naturally the object of a friendly but scrutinizing observation, and whilst witnessing the effect produced on others by her words and actions, she herself beholds her in a new point of view. Faults in her behaviour, and manner of expressing herself, which had been previously unnoticed now strike her forcibly, and she accuses herself of having been negligent in hitherto overlooking them.

Nor can we be astonished at the great importance attached by mothers to a pleasing exterior, when we see how much the impression produced by young persons depends on their being agreeable or not in their manners and appearance. Even the most sensible people are not exempt from the influence of these circumstances, concluding, as they do, that graceful and pleasing manners are proofs of a good disposition and a judicious education. The only mistake is, *a mother's being too apt to imagine that these*

external charms may be formed by exclusive cultivation ; that pleasing manners may be obtained by attending to externals alone.

No doubt the generality of mankind judge only from what they see ; yet even from these slight impressions they sometimes discriminate very justly as to the qualities of the heart. They may not always analyze their feelings very closely ; but their partialities and aversions are alike connected with some idea of a certain moral condition which they suppose to exist. If, after having by their flattering reception of the girl hailed the arrival of the young woman, and promised themselves that she will prove a valuable acquisition to society, they find her deficient in agreeable and estimable qualities, they soon regard her with indifference.

Her mother perceives this when it is too late. Preparations should long ago have been made for those advantages, the want of which she now regrets. True gracefulness springs from gentle and happy feelings, and seems almost the effect of a species of inspiration. It may be increased by the sympathy of example ; but precepts, reproaches, tardy exhortations, seldom do any good, and sometimes excite feelings totally at variance with the disposition which would favour success. Whilst every thing is as yet so indefinite, and girls have too little knowledge *either of themselves* or others to be able to judge

how far they may advance with propriety, and when they ought to stop, there can hardly be a worse guide than that self-esteem which is so continually excited by maternal solicitude; it alternately agitates and paralyzes the youthful mind, without affording it any real assistance.

Observe the formal and almost repulsive manners of some girls; they seem to perform the most trifling acts of politeness with repugnance, and, like the sensitive plant, shrink as soon as approached. No doubt they have been taught to feel this undue dread of exciting notice. Others, on the contrary, full of self-confidence, desirous of attracting attention, laugh incessantly at nothing at all, assume by turns a lively, an ingenuous, or a sensible manner, and are continually throwing around a furtive glance to ascertain whether they are observed. The former do not please at all; the latter offend by their very efforts to please, which lead only to affectation; but in both the error lies in their egotistical feelings having been too much excited.

On the other hand, a girl who is free from vanity remains in the full and quiet possession of any power she may possess of making herself agreeable. Simple benevolence, her natural sympathy in the feelings of others, will lead her to contribute to their pleasure, and she never appears either uninterested, or embarrassed.

The quiet tenor of her existence preserves her from those innumerable susceptibilities which sometimes disturb the serenity of youth. She can bear to be told that she is not well dressed, or that there are faults in her behaviour. Even if reproached with more serious errors, no resentment, or ill-humour, will be displayed in her reply. Easily believing that she may have faults, she will confess them without any fear that she may, by so doing, lower herself in the estimation of others.

All mothers must, of course, occasionally attend to external appearance; but it cannot be too strongly urged upon them to beware of disturbing the tranquillity of their daughter's disposition. There is a charm associated with youth which naturally gains our affection. This charm depends more on the harmony of the different faculties than on their strength; and what is more likely to destroy this harmony in a girl than inspiring her with a fear of ridicule, or with pretensions which she cannot support? Or what can be more inconsistent than for a mother who had formerly seemed to attach importance only to the fulfilment of positive duties, now to exact the most scrupulous obedience to innumerable trifling and arbitrary rules? Aware of this inconsistency of conduct, she frequently endeavours to conceal the real bitterness of her reproaches under an assumed gentleness of

manner; but all these fluctuations and contradictory impressions only tend to harass and irritate her daughter, till in the end she is herself influenced by them; and then, what confusion must reign in her breast!

But to return to more general views.

As our pupil advances in age, the importance of the questions on which we are required to decide becomes still greater. The world lays claim to her, and tempts her with the prospect of brilliant entertainments and new pleasures. What course must a religious mother now pursue? Must she allow the tender plant which she has hitherto so carefully sheltered to inhale the corrupting atmosphere of the world? Is it possible for her daughter, when exposed to such a trial, to take the same interest in her devotional exercises, her studies, her domestic occupations? Such are the doubts so frequently expressed,—such the scruples, often well-founded, and always to be respected, of many Christian mothers. We cannot give any decided opinion on this subject; no general rule can be laid down for resolving these questions. Different determinations must be formed, according to the differences of country, society, situation, individual character; in short, according to the difference of circumstances altogether. Of course no circumstances should have any weight *when set against the true religious end of our*

existence; but if various particulars seem to point out to us the path which in this world we are by God intended to follow, these must not be neglected.

There are situations in which a girl feels no want of worldly pleasures; in which she even forgets their existence, and is capable of relishing such as are in reality much more deserving of the name. We cannot doubt that this is in itself a great happiness; a happiness, too, which is much more easily attained than we are apt to imagine. There are many families where the domestic circle is enlivened by delightful amusements; and the greater a mother's anxiety to keep her daughters away from scenes of vanity, the more she ought to vary their happy, but perhaps monotonous life, by some recreations.

It will be seen that we require a certain amount of amusement for young people. We think their existence should not be always clothed in the same colours, its character not always the same. In human life, as in a symphony composed by a great master, each successive part has its own movement; in all, there is a certain progress which must be kept up towards the proper point; should this be either too rapid, or too slow, the effect of the whole will be lost, and the intention of the composer not accomplished. *The same thing takes place in the*

different ages of life; an habitually contented disposition is perhaps the most certain proof that each period fulfils its proper destination. If the progress seem arrested, if the flow of vital energy seem to languish, pleasure becomes almost necessary as a stimulus.

Not that we would have a continual round of pleasures; but some there must be; indeed, under one form or another, pleasure is perhaps required during the whole course of life. In childhood, it is supplied by mere bodily activity; at a more advanced age by moral and intellectual activity; and to the old, contemplation alone seems to furnish it sufficiently. But youth has other desires; new tastes spring up in the female breast; bodily exercise, taken according to rule, appears devoid of interest, and even disagreeable to girls; and intellectual exertion, if at all prolonged, wearies and disgusts them. No energetic impulse is imparted by these things. What they want is something which will excite both mind and body; and the nearer they approach to womanhood, the greater becomes their craving after pleasure.

On this account, it is much to be regretted that the fine arts, — those sources of pleasure which are so well calculated to satisfy the twofold activity inherent in youth, — are accompanied in modern times by so much vanity, luxury, and frivolity. Yet it would seem that

the impulse thus given to evil dispositions is not necessarily connected with these arts. It would seem that in a select society, where every thing was conducted with propriety, and where the expression of even the quietest enjoyment would be moderated by good taste, music and dancing might safely be allowed. However this may be, as long as our pupil loses none of her gaiety, there is nothing to fear; but if we perceive the delicate flower drooping and losing its beautiful colour, — if we have reason to suppose that what she hears of the delights of balls and concerts, makes her own life appear to her dull and monotonous, the question again arises, what must a religious mother do?

Before we proceed any farther, let us fully acknowledge her rightful authority. Any thing which she considers reprehensible she is perfectly justified in forbidding. Entrusted with a sacred charge, and responsible to God, to her husband, and to her own conscience, these are her only judges. Nor is she under any obligation to declare her reasons for the course she may pursue. Why should she be required to pronounce an anathema against such or such amusements, and thus cast an implied reproach on many other women? It is enough that she disapproves these pleasures either in general, or under the particular circumstances. She *may say* to her daughter, “I forbid these

pleasures for you, and I know that in so doing I may be reproached by many mothers for being too rigid; but why should they thus reproach me, when I do not blame them? They are, no doubt, satisfied with the motives which lead them to a different mode of proceeding; but I should be inexcusable were I to act otherwise. I believe that these amusements would be injurious to your character; and God has entrusted to me the care of your youth in order that I may preserve you from all evil." Would not every daughter respect such scruples, and even honour her mother the more for being actuated by them?

In such a case, too, the daughter's duty is so clear that she cannot, even in her heart, escape from its performance. But if more be exacted from her, if it be expected that such a decree should be confirmed by her own free will, her submission will too often be accompanied by a degree of discontent.

How can we expect that a girl should disapprove of the pleasures of the world so much as voluntarily to renounce them? — unless, indeed, dangers have been pointed out to her, the very idea of which must sully the purity of her mind. All that we can require is, that she should renounce, — not a world which is unknown to her, — but what she knows would *displease* her mother. To ask more would be

to demand an indifference totally foreign to her age, and which is only attained by the faithful Christian at the end of that long pilgrimage on which the youthful traveller is just entering. Be satisfied with an obedience which is yielded, not only without a murmur, but with cheerfulness.

At the age which we are now considering there is nothing we should so much desire for girls as perfect simplicity of heart; eyes too pure even to see evil. If, then, you decide on introducing your daughter into society, follow and protect her there. Tell her that a woman who respects herself is always respected by others; that the most volatile young men are awed by a dignified and quiet manner; and that if a young woman be not treated with deference, it is most likely that she herself has been to blame, and has been too much excited or too much flattered by some trifling compliment. In short, endeavour to make her think more of the disgrace of being subjected to such a trial, than of the glory of acquitting herself well in it.

Again, a girl may be introduced into society only as a sort of experiment. Should a taste for dissipation betray itself, and all her faculties be absorbed by the idea of amusement, the object for which the experiment was made has failed, and a mother must resume her authority-

“ You are no longer capable of application,” she will then say to her daughter, “ your studies are neglected, your most necessary employments have lost all interest for you ; you are no longer what you were ; we must endeavour not only to replace you in your former state, but to raise you to a still better. I have introduced you into the world too soon. Let us wait till your moral strength is increased, and then see what plan must be followed.” Her daughter will not be alarmed by this temporary interdiction of amusement. Had the possibility of it indeed been previously announced to her, she would, no doubt, have avoided it ; she would have moderated her transports, and would not have neglected her studies before and after a day of gaiety. It would have been an excellent exercise of her self-government. But when will mothers be capable of acting with proper firmness ?

Society, however small the part taken in it, requires some attention to the toilette ;—a subject of great interest to most girls. In this case, as in that of amusements, our object should be to allow it to occupy the thoughts as little as possible, and to prevent any very ardent feelings with regard to it. Every woman has such a strong repugnance to being ill dressed, that a mother should never gratuitously wound this *natural* feeling, associated as it is with a fear of

ridicule, which is in some degree connected with modesty. Take care, therefore, that your daughter be well dressed, and allow her to follow the fashion when this is neither improper nor extravagant. The more she feels that she is dressed like other people, the less will she think about the matter.

It may be some guide to a girl on this subject, to be told that her dress is a sort of language: it has a hidden meaning, and shows what idea she desires to give of herself. Hence it follows, that a young person of simple and modest character will never wish to be distinguished by her dress; showy colours, and uncommon patterns will not please her; every thing likely to attract attention will be distasteful to her, and decency will be always scrupulously respected.

But, it may be said, the desire to be dressed like others often leads to extravagance. No doubt it will do so, if we imitate the vain, or those who are richer than ourselves. If in any particular society the style of dress be so expensive as to go beyond the means of her family, a mother ought not to introduce her daughter into it; most likely it is in other respects equally undesirable for her. Should her daughter, by way of economy, propose to be herself the maker up of more costly materials, let the mother beware of agreeing to this. Time so spent would

be worse than wasted; for days together her young head would be filled with the world and its gaities. Works devoted to friendship or charity, and which during their execution fill the heart with gentle emotions, may be precious to women; but such as denote time spent merely in satisfying a taste for frivolity and luxury, cause only painful feelings to people of any sense.

But our great object should be to prevent our daughters wishing for such advantages as are not within their reach. The excitement which is afforded to selfish feelings in childhood often produces bitter fruits in after-life. The slaves of envy suffer in silence, but the pain they endure is even greater than that caused by the sorrows of the heart; for in the latter case the affection is fixed on an external object, and its image gradually fades away, till at length it vanishes altogether; but envy is an internal disease—a gnawing worm, never at a loss for food, and devouring, one after another, our virtues as well as our enjoyments.

A tranquil benevolent disposition, on the contrary, is susceptible of constant pleasure. Every thing contributes to its amusement, and every thing is judged of candidly and disinterestedly.

Suppose one of your daughter's companions should, in her presence, attract universal at-

tention by her great talents, striking beauty, or elegant dress ; do not deny that such things are pleasing, and beware of presenting to your child any of the mean consolations afforded by envy. Reserve for another time such moral reflections as, "No one is happier for such admiration ; the attention and money thus spent might have been more usefully employed ;" for even if such remarks be true, this is not a good opportunity for making them. Why should you give her the idea that you pity her for remaining unnoticed, or that you sympathize in the mortification she must feel at the success of others ? Such conduct is both humiliating, and calculated to corrupt her character.

When we see such meanness, we are inclined to congratulate those girls who, passing their lives in peace, far away from the temptations of the world, are thereby sheltered from its pernicious influence. They realize the charming picture of youth, — ignorance of evil, zeal the most persevering in the exercise of duty, and affections expanding themselves within the domestic circle. At the same time a mother who sincerely believes that a moderate enjoyment of society conduces to the most beneficial results, has sufficient motives for introducing her daughter into the world. But let her take care that she be taught at the same time to understand and to respect those who seclude them-

selves from it, who have sacrificed every thing to God, and whose views are all fixed on the advancement of religion. It is not impossible that she may hereafter receive from them that pity, support, and consolation, which may be denied her by the world; and should she be able to look forward to the attainment of that indifference to its pleasures which is hardly compatible with her present age, it will indeed be a proof of her highmindedness.

But in vain do we look for these qualities in the girl, who, displaying a constant self-possession, imagines herself properly instructed on every subject. Because others are more devoted to pleasure than she is, or less regular in their attendance on public worship, — because she has contrived to observe the so-called happy medium both in worldly amusements and in religion, she presumes to censure those who either stop short, or pass beyond her in these respects. At the same time, it is to those who are distinguished for their piety that she shows the greatest repugnance; she cannot bear the superiority which she imagines them to assume. The same envious disposition which delights in depreciating great talents, attacks also any superiority in Christian virtues; and hence arises the pride of mediocrity — of all prides the most absurd and most incurable. To be afraid of an excess of enthusiasm, and to observe a degree

of moderation in the expression even of the best feelings, are doubtless very desirable rules for a young woman's guidance; but surely there is no merit in having cold feelings, and in loving both God and our neighbour with only a lukewarm affection.

Amidst the dangers, however, which beset women on all sides, let us not be disheartened; true piety and an enlightened understanding will always afford us abundant resources. The mother who constantly seeks for aid from God, even if she have committed some errors during this period of education, when so many delicate points have to be decided, may securely hope for the final success of her plans. And to her daughter we would also say, "Be not alarmed at the numerous difficulties which appear to surround you; apply yourself again and again to prayer, to the Holy Scriptures, to your Saviour. And when the recurrence of any Christian solemnities leads you to bring a great part of the past year under examination, fix your attention particularly on the religious state of your mind: inquire whether you have advanced or gone back in piety. If you find that your praying has been without fervour, that your devotion has too often degenerated into mere form, search into your thoughts,—your recent conduct,—and you will there discover the secret cause of your indifference towards God. But

if, on the contrary, you are so happy as to feel that your zeal, far from abating, has become more energetic, thank God and your mother for this; guard against any feeling of pride, and beware of slackening in your exertions. In the smiling season of youth every thing appears to you auspicious; the sky is serene, and the breeze favourable; but remember you have not yet left the port."

CHAPTER IV.

ENTRANCE ON WOMANHOOD.

THERE is no receding; behold your daughter, at eighteen, with all the charms of youth! In her gentle and dignified appearance we recognize a being who feels her own responsibility and the new importance which her actions have acquired! Is it possible to contemplate without emotion this flower so recently expanded, — this external perfecting of one of the creatures of God?

Yet it must be acknowledged that unless youth be accompanied by beauty, or at least by a fascinating gracefulness, it fails in making a deep impression; if these gifts have been denied by nature, the imagination remains untouched; and even at this interesting age the unregarding world may pass our pupil by with indifference.

But in her own family, — with her mother especially — this is far from being the case. At this age, which has been looked forward to with so much impatience, the slightest pretensions to beauty are magnified by maternal self-love and affection; and when it is impossible for

even a mother's eye to be thus blinded, she consoles herself with the idea of a certain indescribable charm, which must always please. At all events her work is now finished; she has only to make its merits known, — to place it in the most favourable light. All her dormant ambition and frivolity are revived at the idea of her beloved daughter's success; who, on her part, will easily enter into her mother's feelings. She is equally anxious to please, to be amused and admired; she is delighted at having reached in life that summit, to attain which she has so long been toiling up the steep ascent.

How, indeed, can she avoid such thoughts when all who immediately surround her — all whom she sees — teach her the same lesson? Is it not right that she should enjoy this spring-time of life? Is not her education now finished? Has she not as much information as the generality of her sex? What pressing duties has she to fulfil? Her parents themselves have so little need of her that their most anxious wish is to see her married; and how can she do better than promote the accomplishment of these wishes by displaying her gracefulness and agreeable qualities wherever she is likely to meet with her future husband, and by joining in all those parties of which she constitutes one of the greatest ornaments?

These views of youth are, in our opinion, false and injurious; and yet we are far from wishing this age to be debarred from such amusements as are suited to its particular dispositions. Unless a young person should have been led by a deep and sincere feeling of piety to renounce the world altogether, we would much rather that her first impression of its pleasures should be received before marriage. Can it be judicious to reserve for the time when the most important duties are required, that mental intoxication, which will be all the more dangerous from no mother being at hand to moderate it? or to add all the attraction of novelty to that period of gaiety which is consequent on marriage, and thus run the risk of diverting the mind from the sacredness of the connection? On this account it would be our wish that some amusements, and a certain amount of liberty, should be allowed young women before marriage. But we are far indeed from considering this period of youth as it is too often regarded. It seems to us a profanation of the destiny of human beings to hold the dangerous opinion that there is an age when pleasure, and the seeking of a frivolous success in society, constitute the true vocation of women. If we once admit that at any period a being, intended by her Creator to be con-

stantly advancing in virtue, can be excused from the task of perfecting her character, we abandon every feeling of religion, — every feeling of respect for the dignity of the soul.

In our opinion, the only time which can give us any hope of bringing the female character in general to a higher degree of excellence is that which intervenes between youth and marriage. It is only when common education has accomplished its part, that woman is able to take a higher flight, and to follow that course which her talents, her taste, and the peculiar tendency of her moral feelings seem to point out. The question relates not merely to some vague notion of the perfecting of women in general; it relates to the direct interest of each individual; in all we must be prepared to repel the attack of a real evil, which threatens the first appearance of youth, and, if not resisted, rapidly increases in strength.

In order to judge of the dangers to which young women are exposed on their first entrance into the world, let us consider who are the most admired, — upon whom the general attention is fixed. Is it not before the most beautiful that all bow down in homage? No doubt an open and noble countenance is often an outward mark of true dignity of mind: but how much is pride — the earliest and most implacable enemy of the human race — to be

dreaded? At first, indeed, it ~~is~~ ^{is} a quiet and less tumultuous ~~stage~~ ^{stage}, and is content with being admired: but by degrees it is not satisfied, unless it be more admired than others: it must carry all before it, and remain its sole conqueror. And let us not fall into the fatal error of imagining that pride may in some respects prove a useful safeguard. On the contrary, it leads us to brave dangers, it gives an additional advantage to those who would mislead us, and deadens the feelings which would teach us to have recourse to our only true aid. Is it necessary to add more?

But though much has been said of the danger of beauty, there is another, and perhaps still more alluring gift, that of gracefulness, which has perhaps not been sufficiently distrusted. It is a charm to be dreaded, both for those who possess it, and those who feel its influence; and yet this gift ought not to be considered an inauspicious for a young woman; it was granted to her with a benevolent intention, and in the natural defence of a weak sex. Deprived of it, women would be more frequently oppressed, and less frequently pitied. How often in the anger or harshness of man softened by the touching gracefulness of his companion!

We must, however, allow that either the simplicity of a child, or the most elevated moral feeling, is necessary to enable the person to

make an irreproachable use of this important gift. The moment a woman perceives that she has a personal influence, that her words and conduct are approved on account of her attractive qualities, and not dispassionately judged of, she is exposed to great danger. She is continually tempted to use this power of bestowing a charm even on her failings, and of making them so interesting that she is loved the more on their account; and she becomes afraid of correcting faults which are thus made the means of pleasing.

Without carrying these reflections further, it is easy to see whither they tend. When a young woman has once found out the power with which her gracefulness endows her, every other advantage is lost sight of; and if she meet with this gracefulness in others,—if she feel, and cause others to feel, this fascinating charm,—the result is a sympathy so irresistible, an attraction so strong, that every thing yields to the enchantment, and reason has no longer any influence on her mind.

In different proportions these charms of gracefulness and beauty seem to be the lot of many young persons; and the importance attached to them, and indulgence granted them, are too often a source of unhappiness. If they imagine themselves possessed of them, they exaggerate their power, and hence arise overweening pretensions,

followed ere long by mortifying disappointments. If, on the other hand, they believe themselves deficient in these qualities, they are disheartened and depressed; and their exalted idea of the happiness of being admired,—a happiness which they have no hope of enjoying—exposes them to many dangers.

A very common fault at this age, and one not very easily avoided, is that of being too much engrossed by personal considerations. The attention of which she has lately become the object, the constant anxiety or tender watchfulness of her mother,—her own scruples, hopes, and little internal struggles,—all tend to direct the thoughts of a young woman to herself. Though susceptible of a generous ardour, of noble enthusiasm, of devoted attachment, she is not entirely disinterested; she admires her own forgetfulness of self, she is pleased with the recollection of her sacrifices, and feels a certain degree of pride in her capability of strong affection.

These feelings are so natural that it is impossible to treat them with severity; they are easily accounted for by that ardour of character which is peculiar to this age, added to, the restraint imposed by education. Nevertheless her apparent tranquillity, a girl of eighteen has strong internal emotions. This very circumstance obliges her to keep a strict

watch over herself; and as her imagination is easily excited by the impression made on her by others, she is apt to exaggerate the effect she herself produces on them. Her mind is engrossed by what has been recommended, what she has observed, experienced, or desired; and her attention, thus in so many ways directed to herself, she has no time to think of others.

But would our hastening the time of entering on a solemn engagement put an end to this state of selfish mental excitement? Will the prospect of marriage, or the presence of him to whom she is to devote herself, dissipate at once her many childish notions? We fear not. Marriage itself (owing, we must say, to the manner in which the world has dealt with it,) has its frivolities. The glory of having made a conquest, the effect which will be produced by the news of the event, all the splendid preparations for a wedding,—these are amply sufficient to upset a head which has already been thrown off the balance. The intoxication of folly may continue, for experience has long since shown that marriage is not an infallible nostrum for producing sobriety.

A variety of causes unite in disposing the youthful mind to a dangerous species of enthusiasm; and our great object must be to keep it in a state of tranquillity. For this purpose nothing has a more salutary influence, both on

the head and the heart, than the vigorous and continued exercise of the attention.

And here we are reminded of our former advice. The moderating power of a steady application is so generally acknowledged, that we have no hesitation in recommending severe and arduous studies for an age of all others the most under the dominion of imagination. On this account, even that religious instruction which has hitherto been addressed exclusively to the heart, should now, by means of such more profound studies as are connected with that of the Bible, be addressed to the understanding.

Morality too,—that morality which we have as yet viewed only as an object of religious feeling,—it would now be desirable to consider more as a matter of reasoning, in its relation to individual and social utility. Generally speaking, that happy instinct, that innate good sense, with which women are gifted, and above all, the idea of the will of God, form a sufficient safeguard for them ; yet there are some who, led away by a weak sophistry, aspire after political rights, equality in the marriage state, and even the total abolition of this sacred tie ; and it becomes therefore very necessary to lead minds, little exercised in reasoning, to follow out into all their evil consequences, principles which, at first, strike them as true and ennobling.

Here I would again have recourse to the

serious and authoritative voice of a father; I would desire that the earnest and well-founded conviction of one whom she must respect should make an especial impression on his daughter. A mother feels too much indignation at such ideas to dwell upon them for a moment; her own susceptibility, as well as that of her daughter, forbids the discussion of such subjects between them. But a father has a right to speak; he can show her that the obedience of a wife is as necessary to the marriage state as that bond itself is to the existence of society; and he will easily confute that idle sophistry which finds such ready allies in the pride and frivolity of woman.

The point of most importance is, to calm the excitement natural to this period. The best way of interrupting the habitual course of the thoughts, and putting a stop to the reveries which absorb the imagination, would be to choose for our pupil such objects of study as are entirely unconnected with her own interests. If we would banish from her mind as much as possible all personal ideas, we must occupy her with inanimate nature; and here it is that we find the inestimable value of the exact and natural sciences. The sublime study of Astronomy will furnish a most salutary occupation; one which, whilst it satisfies that happy taste for *harmony* and beauty which predominates in

youth, will often, in after life, tend to tranquillize the mind, and soothe woman under the various cares and anxieties of her earthly existence.

Another study, too, which is, indeed, little more than an amusement, Botany, will be found very suitable to this age. It offers a delightful employment in those walks which are absolutely necessary for health, but which, if solitary and devoid of all interest, might afford too much temptation for indulging in the flights of imagination.

But here I pause. There is still one vacancy to be filled. Amongst the many intellectual pleasures and exercises which naturally suggest themselves to young people, there is one, Literature, on which we have not yet touched. This subject, so intimately connected with all their interests, claims a distinct place in our consideration.

CHAPTER V.

SAME PERIOD CONTINUED.—TENDENCY TO A
ROMANTIC DISPOSITION.

IF we have appeared, in some of our late remarks, to treat the imagination as an enemy, it is because we so often behold it in early youth taking a wrong direction. By continually recalling to the memory impressions already too vivid, it increases that tendency to egotism which is the prevailing fault of this age. But were the powers of the imagination allowed a wider range,—one more free from all personal considerations,—its effects would be highly beneficial. It would then be employed in collecting for the mind all the most agreeable resources afforded by nature, the arts, and the human intellect. Concentrated on itself, it produces only injurious effects; but directed towards external objects, it diffuses innumerable blessings.

The course of those habitual thoughts which are uncontrolled by the will may, for a time, be arrested by studies of a more severe nature; and hence these studies present the great advantage of allowing time for the exercise of

reflection. But the current has only been checked in its course;—its direction has not been changed; and as the imagination cannot be suppressed, it appears to us that, when innocently exercised, it will afford much salutary amusement, even without any effort on the part of the will. Literary tastes fall within its department; and surely these tastes are very desirable for women! In fact, it would almost seem that these recreations, so tranquil, so sedentary, so devoid of all ostentation, were made on purpose for them. Only let a judicious choice be made from these ennobling resources, and no one will venture to say that so powerful a source of consolation in trouble, so constant an aid in the developement of the mind, ought to be denied them.

The literature of many countries is rich in such interesting works as are calculated to excite the imagination, without producing any injurious effect. Nor, in speaking, as I am now doing, of amusement, do I allude to entertaining fictions alone. Surely no mind is so perversely constituted as to consider the pleasure derived from any work diminished by its relating only to facts, or by its conveying instruction unaccompanied by mental fatigue. On the contrary, such pleasure is enhanced by reflection, and the remembrance of it is attended with genuine satisfaction.

Hence it is that history (if enlivened by dramatic interest), memoirs, travels, original letters, not to mention the lives of such persons, of both sexes, as have been distinguished for their piety, afford an abundant gratification to harmless curiosity.

But in the midst of such treasures, with such delightful means of occupying more leisure than any one life ought to have, are young persons in general satisfied? We fear not. We fear that they have too often acquired a taste for reading of a more dangerous kind. They do not find that their own peculiar interests, — the feelings and thoughts with which, at eighteen, they are occupied, can be found in books containing only a detail of facts. But why should they at this age be occupied with such thoughts and feelings only? Why should so many girls be interested only by romances, — books which are exclusively devoted to these subjects? Because, whilst reading them, they experience emotions hitherto unknown, and give themselves up to those agitations, so interesting, and yet so injurious as opening the way to inroads of the passions.

No doubt the germ of those feelings which we most dread for woman exists naturally in her breast; but it might lie dormant during her whole life if not artificially forced by such reading as favours its developement. A young

woman cannot, indeed, be ignorant of the happiness associated with a tender affection; she may experience a transient emotion at the idea of some time or other enjoying this happiness in marriage; but, unless her imagination have been filled with idle fancies, she will soon resume her habitual tranquillity. On the other hand, a young person who has no pleasure in reading any thing but romances must be secretly charmed by the fascinating language of the passions. Observe how she hurries over her other employments, how quickly and methodically her studies and other duties appear to be performed, because they are all done mechanically, and her mind takes no part in them. Whatever she is doing, her thoughts are entirely occupied by fictitious scenes, which she follows out in her imagination. She is not only agitated by tender feelings, but dazzled by the glory with which the heroine of her romance is invested; and when she reflects that a similar lot may be hers, that, by producing a similar impression, she may acquire a sort of magical power, and may have to decide on the destiny of some adorable being, whose happiness or misery will depend on her choice or rejection, with what a triumphant pride is her heart filled! How is it possible that books which raise a woman to this height of glory,

and thereby elevate the condition of the whole sex, should not be preferred to all others?

But is such a state of mind desirable or healthy? Does it not at once lead to that inward and personal direction of the imagination which we most dread? Surely, if we look forward at all into the future destiny of these young créatures, we ought to make it our great care to preserve them from such emotions. Many of them will, no doubt, remain unmarried; and what will then become of all these illusions, these dazzling visions, so soon to vanish away? Will they not be succeeded by a vacuum of the heart, by the humiliating idea of having failed in the great object of existence? And amongst those who may be married, how few are there whose hopes are even for a moment realized; and in how many cases is this moment purchased at the expense of bitter regrets! Surely mere worldly prudence, independent of any other considerations, should teach a mother to preserve her child from such dangerous allurements.

Besides, mothers should avoid imprudently raising such hopes, in order that their daughters may be able, should it be the will of God, to enjoy the happiness of loving and being loved. That this is a great happiness cannot be denied; and although it may sometimes be followed by tears, it diffuses over the whole existence an

indefinable charm, which is not without a salutary effect. But the more delightful it appears in imagination, the more difficult does it become to identify it with real life. If a young man, whose character is such as to afford reasonable expectations of happiness, pay his addresses to a young woman inspired with such romantic notions, he appears to her hardly capable of feeling what she calls love. No mark of his attachment will satisfy her expectations, nor will he ever realize the ideal image of her imagination. Influenced, however, by the desirableness of the connection, she accepts him as her husband; and what is the consequence? Unable to conceal her disappointment, her unreasonable grief tends to cool his affection; finding that every expression of his feelings comes short of what is required by her morbid imagination, he gives up the attempt; and will even at times utter one of those cruel expressions which must for ever destroy a woman's happiness.

The condemnation we have pronounced on romances may, perhaps, appear too severe; and we acknowledge that in some of these works noble and generous sentiments are expressed, and examples of virtue presented to the youthful reader. We acknowledge, too, that the effect of such reading may be to promote a certain refined delicacy and dignity; but these

advantages are as nothing, compared with the important considerations by which we are influenced. The fact, the important fact, is, that romances increase the susceptibility to that passion by which the happiness of women is too often destroyed.

It will, no doubt, be said that, in thus forbidding romances, we are unnecessarily rigid; that the idea of love, diffused as it is all around, constantly referred to both in books and conversation, must enter the youthful breast; that history speaks of it, or presumes its existence; that those master-pieces of poetry and the drama, a knowledge of which forms an essential part of education, are alone sufficient to insure its developement. To a certain point we allow that these objections are well founded; but the essential thing is to determine this point.

It is indeed true that all young persons are aware of the existence of a certain feeling called love; but this is of little consequence; what they *learn* is of slight importance compared with what they *feel*. The danger to them consists in their being allowed to follow the progress of the passion, to sympathize in all its variations, to identify themselves with the person who is the subject of it; and it is from romances alone that this danger arises. In poetry and in the drama the dignity of the verse and the splendour of the scenes raise the hero

above the common lot of mortals. But the familiar representation of domestic life, in which a young woman continually recognizes her own situation, produces a lasting impression on her mind; and so powerful has been the influence of romances, that real life has imitated them, more than they real life.

Another evil arising from such reading is, that it causes an undue importance to be attached by a young woman to first impressions. No sooner has the idea of being loved excited the slightest emotion in her breast, than, in imitation of the heroines of romance, she is convinced that it is for life; and should she be told by a sentimental friend that her hour is come, she will resign herself to her fate, and devote her future life to the worship of an ideal image.

In such a case, a mother ought to be the best friend. But how many faults on this subject do mothers commit! If they are themselves of a romantic disposition, eager to become the confidant of their daughter's feelings, they aggravate the evil; if, on the contrary, they are timid and easily embarrassed, they feel a sort of repugnance to speaking on subjects requiring such delicacy of treatment, and produce an injurious effect by their reserve. Feelings, of which her mother avoids speaking, acquire additional importance in the imagination of her daughter. Again, if a mother be not

timid, she may fall into an opposite error. Imagining that she can, by a tone of raillery, guard her daughter against such illusions, she advises her not even to listen to any flattering speeches; tells her that young men seek only their own amusement, or that of their companions, in thus endeavouring to make an impression on her heart; and should she be so injudicious as to add a sarcastic remark on the vanity which leads those, whose powers of pleasing are almost below par, to imagine themselves capable of captivating all around them, her daughter's confidence will be lost to her for ever.

Suppose, too, that her daughter should afterwards discover, in the man who seeks her regard, proofs of a sincerity of heart, which, though perchance only temporary, is at the time real, what will be the consequence? She will be too deeply moved by them; for, the more such feelings have been represented to her as rare, the more she will be touched at meeting with them; and if she be imbued with the false maxims inculcated in romances, this will be a dangerous trial for her.*

* In the severe condemnation which Madame Necker de Saussure pronounces on all novel reading, we suspect that her opinion on this subject has been partly influenced by her acquaintance with German and French romances. Our English literature is more fortunate in this respect; an English mother would hardly wish to deprive her

The happiness which arises from the consciousness of being loved, and the new situation in which it places one whose existence has hitherto perhaps been entirely insignificant, imposes it as a duty on mothers to speak to their daughters openly and sincerely on the subject, and especially to do so when they perceive in them any tendency to an excess of enthusiasm. They must be warned beforehand that the emotion they experience when certain expressions of feeling are addressed to them, is not altogether innocent; that it savours of vanity, and often arises from foolish and unauthorised hopes. Such emotions should be internally repressed, and should be carefully concealed from observation. Surely it is not consistent either with reason or dignity to allow a man who is scarcely known to us, whose merit and sentiments are still doubtful, to perceive that he has the power of exciting such emotions! Such considerations alone will often be sufficient; and how, indeed, can we venture to say more? for, above all things, we must respect the delicacy of these young creatures, and acknowledge with reverence that timid instinct of woman which has been bestowed

daughter of the innocent pleasure to be derived from such works of fiction as those of Miss Austin, Miss Edgeworth, Walter Scott, and many others who might be mentioned.—*Note by Translator.*

upon her by Heaven as the guide of her conduct. Nothing is more beautiful than that modesty, so tremblingly alive, which revives in the breast of a mother, at the mere idea of alarming the innate modesty of her daughter. But here again Christian faith comes to our aid. When we are once fully persuaded of the corruption of human nature, we are not astonished to find that the most soothing feelings, those which apparently most resemble the tender affections of the heart, are often far from being so pure and amiable as we had imagined. She who has long been aware of the existence of internal foes, is not surprised at meeting with them, and is always prepared to struggle against them.

Amongst other warnings and precautions it will often be desirable for a mother to explain to her daughter the peculiar difficulties attending the choice of a husband. Many unreasonable hopes will be prevented by clearly pointing out to her, not only those moral requisites, about which there can be no dispute, but those also of situation and fortune, on which her parents' consent would depend. And by taking care that her life is one of activity, and so agreeable as not to be placed in any very strong contrast with that ideal world she may have pictured to herself, every dangerous inclination will by degrees fade away.

Yet even the greatest prudence will not always suffice. It will sometimes happen that in spite of every care a young woman may, even against her own better judgment, have her heart absorbed by some too fascinating object; her tranquillity may be disturbed by one of those prepossessions which scarcely admit of a happy termination. We are not here supposing a genuine attachment; there is nothing deserving this name in the impression produced by a man who has not yet been able either to manifest a character worthy of regard, or to prove that he truly loves. We are speaking only of a passing delusion; and as every modest woman will desire to conceal her feelings on such an occasion, a prudent mother will show that she approves of this desire.

“Give me your confidence once for all, my child,” will she say, “let neither your actions nor your feelings be concealed from me; but do not indulge, even with me, in any superfluous overflowings of the heart. Even in your prayers to God, be careful not to enter minutely on the state of your feelings, and above all do not dwell on them to yourself. Fly from your own thoughts; avoid all solitary reveries, or any thing which might tend to soften your heart; avoid too all idle occupations,—those long pieces of needlework which require little or no attention, and in the

performance of which the rapidity of the thoughts increases and is increased by the dexterity of the fingers.* Betake yourself with steadiness to your occupations, and choose such studies as are most likely to interrupt your habitual reveries."

But the most efficacious resource at such a time will be found in the exercise of charity; a resource which will indeed serve to soothe distresses of a more serious kind than such as proceed only from the useless regrets of the imagination. If, out of consideration for her tender age, we have hitherto spared our daughter the pain of witnessing the sufferings to which human beings are liable, let her now be introduced to such scenes; let her enter the dwellings of misery, where every species of distress is to be met with. Her existence will thus

* Richter says that more young women have been ruined by needlework than by romances. This is an exaggerated statement. But those romantic feelings which are silently favoured by manual occupation, though they may be more common in Germany, exist, in a greater or less degree, every where; and when we reflect how many girls are obliged to spend their days in this employment,—girls, too, who from the contrast afforded by their poverty, their wretched homes, and the harsh and rude language of those around them, find an inexpressible charm in the expressions, the manners, and the generosity of those who seek their ruin,—we cannot but feel that the temptation must be far too strong for them; and whilst deeply commiserating these poor victims, should endeavour by every means in our power to preserve them from such a fate.

be reinvigorated, and a revolution effected in her mind. She will behold the real sufferings of life, and in learning to assuage them she will also learn how to appreciate her own blessings. Deeply impressed with the goodness of God to herself, she will enter on a career of activity; the visions of youth will be dispelled, and as the mist, in which her thoughts and wishes have so long been shrouded, is dispersed, every thing will be seen in a clearer and more distinct form. Though ready to pardon those romantic illusions, which have now vanished, she acknowledges that no attachment which she has yet felt deserves the name of love; she feels more than ever capable of devoting herself to God alone, should such be his will; or to God, and, with all due subordinacy, also to a husband, should she meet with one deserving her affection. Strengthened, and relying on Heaven for further assistance, she will be able to obey that excellent precept, "Keep thy heart above all things."

CHAPTER VI.

PERIOD IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING MARRIAGE.

WE have latterly been engaged in considering the various effects produced on most young women by their new situation in a world as yet unknown to them. We have seen that their relish for pleasure, their idea of the great importance attached to the part they are now about to perform, their dread of the opinion of the world, their desire to be distinguished, and their wish to excite tender emotions in others, — all tend to concentrate their thoughts on themselves. No doubt there are exceptions; nor in any case are they constantly so occupied; disinterested affection and good feelings will occasionally be displayed by all; but self, — the only object which is never entirely lost sight of, — will appear again and again.

These fluctuations, arising as they do from the weakness of human nature, must be excused; but how much more satisfactory is it to behold a young woman enabled, either by means of an enlightened reason, or from the still higher motive of a sincere piety, to control

them. She commands our real sympathy. We view her as a being not only more noble and more true, but far more poetical and imaginative, than a sentimental girl. By her candour and simplicity she realizes the ideal image we had formed of woman in all her youthful charms, and inspires us even with a feeling of respect.

We believe too that she possesses more true sensibility. That need of loving which is so much talked of is not so infallible a proof of tenderness of heart as might be imagined, and frequently arises only from the wish to become the object of an enthusiastic passion. A woman of real feeling will never be at a loss for an object to love; and will be more likely to complain of the strength of her affections than of any deficiency in them. She feels indeed that she is capable of another species of happiness; but the hope of it is kept in the background, nor does she ever, by an ill-timed emotion, betray to others her secret aspirations. How much does this purity of character raise her above those girls who have but one idea,—that they are of an age to marry! Her mind, free from all personal considerations, is interested in every thing; the excitement of conversation is a pleasure to her, and though she may, from believing herself inferior to those with whom she converses, be reserved in the expression of

her own opinions, we easily perceive that her intellectual powers are never idle.

Does it follow then that all wish to please must be given up? By no means. We do not indeed allow this wish to be the actuating principle of conduct; and perhaps when speaking of absolute perfection we might be entitled to require a higher and purer motive for pleasing; yet, in our present state, we must be content with what renders society tolerable, and makes it an intercourse of living beings rather than a display of dress and personal qualities. We must therefore excuse this desire of pleasing; but whilst doing so, any thing in the smallest degree savouring of coquetry is decidedly to be condemned.

It may be asked what is coquetry? or at least what is that slight tinge of it which is generally reckoned allowable? Though a trifling thing in appearance, it is of much importance in reality. More evident faults, such as an undue anxiety to be distinguished either for talents or beauty, — to dazzle — to eclipse others, — often hardly deserve the name of coquetry: whilst a look, a smile, a tone, may be justly so denominated. Coquetry has always a particular view; a design to touch some chord in the heart, to establish some intimate connection with the object whom it is intended to captivate. When the desire to please has

once been admitted into the breast, it easily degenerates ; and hence it is, that in a tender conscience this desire is always an object of watchfulness.

For a young person of highminded and tranquil character, the interval between youth and marriage is generally a happy period, possessing the peculiar advantage of being almost entirely exempted from anxiety respecting the future. She is perhaps still under a little more restraint than is agreeable ; she cannot do all that she wishes ; she is not always at liberty to cultivate a particular talent, or fulfil a particular duty ; but the obscurity in which her future destiny is involved prevents her considering any troubles as permanent, and she bears them easily. Every thing may be changed, and changed for the better, because she would at once reject any less happy lot. Her present happiness is augmented by the idea of the additional happiness she may hereafter enjoy.

Society, too, is to her a source of pleasure ; it does not constitute a necessary part of her existence ; this consists in the exercise of filial affection, in her studies, in the performance of her duties ; but it has great attractions for her. In time, however, these attractions lose their charm ; when we meet with little that pleases us, society becomes insipid ; the trouble at-

tending it seems greater, and the restraints it imposes become more burdensome. It sometimes happens that a young woman who has been wearied by the ceaseless fluctuations of this period of life, or who may perhaps have experienced a secret disappointment, forms a decided resolution not to marry. She retires by degrees from the world, and lays out a plan of life for herself: a life consisting entirely in good works, with a continual progress in knowledge and duty. By devoting her thoughts to God, a powerful and undying interest is associated with her existence.

But our concern at present is with those who do marry.

In deciding on contracting an engagement for life, a young woman is generally much influenced by circumstances. She has perhaps been induced to form a favourable opinion of her future husband from some conversation she has had with him. His manner of expressing himself, his opinions on particular subjects, have pleased her. Indeed, without some such motive, of what value would her consent to the engagement have been? It must have been entered into either in obedience to the authority of others, or from the most frivolous reasons. And what can be so derogatory to a woman's dignity, as for her to promise obedience and attachment to one whom she scarcely knows?

From the joy with which an engagement between two young people is generally hailed in their respective families, it would seem as if marriage were in itself esteemed a blessing. How else can we account for parents, who delight in the society of their daughter, being so much pleased at the idea of parting both with her and a portion of their fortune, that they sometimes hardly inquire whether she herself participates in their joy? How else can we account for a mother, especially, being so ready to transfer her most valued prerogative? Is there not something providential in this universal satisfaction, — as if every thing were so arranged as to lead naturally and easily to this new condition of life?

We acknowledge, that in our opinion marriage is the state of all others the best calculated for raising a woman to the highest degree of excellence. When this sacred connection is viewed in its true light, when it is considered as a divine institution, it implies such entire self-denial and devotedness, that it must always constitute the best school for improving the character; and even when the prospect of it has not been embellished by any very enthusiastic affection, it involves so many interesting connections with life, so many new directions are given to the feelings, such a variety of duties arise to bestow additional value

on every hour, that a great increase of moral developement and happiness must result from this enlargement of existence.

But do we find that marriage is generally considered in this light? Is the beauty of this union perceived in its full extent? Is it viewed as an opportunity of advancing in that path which is marked out for us by Christianity? We fear this is not often the case, and perhaps even least so with those who look forward with the greatest hope of happiness to the future. Yet the tender feeling with which they are inspired must always be interesting; it forms a part of the divine dispensations, and must often in the end bring back their souls to God.

In fact, how can the thoughts continue occupied with personal interests, when the pivot on which those interests have hitherto turned is removed? Self no longer exists; the will is become subject to another will, — a will, too, which is dearer to us than our own. This wonderful change, this revolution in all our motives, would almost act as a religious principle, were the object of such devotion worthy of it; were he not liable to error, to changeableness, to death. But with all its imperfections, it yields only to the love of God.

We would, therefore, say to parents, if the conditions which you have a right to exact

have been in great measure fulfilled, suffer your daughter to follow the dictates of her own heart, and even make some sacrifices yourselves in order to enable her to do so. Her happiness can never be perfect; hopes which have been raised so high must inevitably be followed by some disappointments; but the affection with which she is animated will be a sufficient guarantee for her conduct; and the idea that she has herself chosen her lot in life will make her support its ills with such fortitude, and devote herself so entirely to her duties, that you will hereafter rejoice in the recollection of your compliance with her wishes. There may be some risk in trusting to the dictates of the heart; but is not this also the case, even in our most prudent decisions?

At the same time, unless this affection, which seems often to usurp the place of every other, be accompanied by a deep religious feeling, it must be attended with some disadvantages. If a young woman who is thus engrossed be told that the idea of duty constitutes the only true principle of married life, that no other actuating motive is in harmony with the spirit of this holy institution, she replies, "Why need I think of duty? My love will itself engage me to fulfil all my obligations. Will not the happiness of my husband constitute my happiness; and his interest, both in this world and

the next, be mine also? Why must I be taught to perform, under the cold name of duty, actions to which I should be prompted by my feelings alone?"

Such expressions may sound very touching; but the woman who makes use of them shows little knowledge of the human heart, and of the place which religion should there occupy. No involuntary impulse, however lawful or desirable in itself, will long serve to direct us; and in fact it already directs us ill, when it would persuade us that we have no need of any rule or restraint.

The principle of religious duty is never so entirely passive in the mind as not to modify in some degree its condition. Even on occasions when the feelings might seem able to decide, it impresses a more sacred and dignified character on our conduct. If we consider the various engagements which a woman takes upon herself when she marries, it will at once be perceived that none of them can be performed in their full extent if she follow no guide but her heart. For,—passing over the duty of fidelity—let us see what other engagements she has entered into;—obedience, devotedness, and respect. Now with regard to the first of these, obedience, no one denies that it is the duty of a woman to obey her husband; but were she to trust to her feelings as guides in this respect,

they might often be opposed to this obedience ; they might stop short or go beyond it, and might find no fixed resting place. Should her husband require from her the sacrifice of some plan, or some habit, which perhaps had its origin in her affection for him, she might say to herself, " I love him too well to obey him ; " and this excuse, frequently repeated, might end in her considering herself exonerated from the duty of submission. But so sacred is the idea of dependence, that it forms in fact the real foundation of marriage, distinguishing this holy connection from every other relation of life. The obedience of a daughter to her parents is not voluntary ; she did not choose them for her parents ; her husband alone is the master whom she has selected of her own free will. But if she disallow his authority, how can he protect her ? How can he support her if she do not lean on him ?

Again, if we consider a wife's devotedness to her husband, it would seem as if here, at any rate, the affections might attain their highest excellence. Sacrifices which would not be required by the severest morality, are prompted and accomplished by affection alone, and have frequently raised women to the rank of heroines. But whilst we admire and encourage such delightful impulses of feeling, we must not overlook the errors which spring from them. For

instance, a woman may generally display devotedness, and yet fail in it at the desirable moment; the impulse by which she is guided may not actuate her on every occasion. Besides, such devotedness as depends only on the feelings of the heart, requires a return in kind; here the desire of equality again appears. No doubt there have been wives who, when forsaken, and perhaps wounded in their dearest affections, have still, supported by their high sense of duty, retained this devotedness. But when this is not the case, and a woman finds herself deserted or despised, she is often led astray by the very tenderness of her feelings; and, tempted by the craving she feels for a return of affection, has recourse to culpable means. Wives thus forsaken have gone so far as to aim at exciting their husband's jealousy; or have even been led into more guilty measures in order to avenge themselves. But we cannot bring ourselves to dwell on such depravities.

As to respect, it is in the first instance promised with cheerfulness. Every woman honours the man whom she loves. Affection and esteem are so closely united in her heart, that she finds it impossible to separate them. Esteem may be shaken long, very long, before affection is endangered; love will subsist on imaginary good qualities, or adhere pertinaciously to all that remains of virtue. And even when the

veil is at length withdrawn, respect is not entirely lost ; for want of any better hold, it attaches itself to the idea of that mutual bond by which husband and wife are united. Then it is that a woman is reduced to the sad task of redoubling her apparent attention in order to preserve the esteem of society for him whom she herself can no longer esteem. But even under this hard trial—perhaps the most painful a woman can have to endure—the Christian wife does not despair. She can still derive hope from its true source ; she never forgets that her husband is one of God's children, that his soul is precious in the sight of his Heavenly Father ; and her respect for him is revived by such recollections. Her conviction, too, of the weakness and corruption of their common nature prevents any disunion between them ; never is she for a moment tempted to think too highly of her own superiority. With such feelings she can never, by either words or actions, wound his pride ; and she has a far greater chance of recalling him to virtue, of leading him to listen to the voice of his Saviour, and to feel the goodness of his God who is ready to pardon him.

Thus, in every possible situation, the various errors incident to a feeling which has for its object a human being, may be averted by that principle of duty which refers every thing to.

God. Religion affords the only actuating principle which is sufficiently elevated to be capable of governing our whole life. Yet we cannot doubt that a tender and devoted affection is also designed to be another actuating motive by which the conduct of a woman in married life is to be directed. She, in whom these two principles exist in the highest degree, and in perfect equilibrium, will present the model of a truly Christian wife. But where is such a model to be found? Is there not always some want of due proportion in the feelings called forth by different situations, and are there not situations in which the inequality of their development seems unavoidable?

It may happen that a young woman, without any feeling of vanity, decides on marrying a man who has not inspired her with any very strong attachment. Peculiar circumstances, the evident interest of her family, or the anticipation of unhappiness in a single life, will often account for such a determination. But should she go so far as to overcome a natural repugnance, we must consider this effort as an act of imprudence. Such an opposition to the dictates of nature marks out at once the boundary beyond which neither the influence of parents, nor the submission of a daughter, should ever pass. It may indeed be said, and truly, that this is all an affair of the imagination. But the power of

the imagination is not to be braved with impunity ; and its antipathies are even more difficult to conquer than its preferences.

But should a young woman perceive in her future husband qualities likely hereafter to conciliate her affections, and should her own reflections convince her that in her particular circumstances the best thing she can do is to form such a connection, she has, we think, a great chance of happiness. During the internal struggles which precede such a determination, she must have deliberately weighed the importance of the engagement into which she is about to enter ; and if, without being too much engrossed by her own destiny, she has thought of marriage as a life of devotedness to another, — as an exercise, and often a difficult exercise, of virtue, — the result of such views may be a high-minded state of feeling which will sustain and ennoble her whole existence.

Having once fully conceived the idea of religious duty, she will still have to cultivate in her own heart the development of that affection so necessary to the happiness of marriage. But to an affectionate and well-disposed mind, this is not so difficult a task as might be supposed ; for it is often easier to content the heart, than to satisfy our imagination and self-esteem.

CHAPTER VII.

ON MARRIAGE.

It will not be supposed that we have idea of treating in detail a subject so very important as that of marriage. All we attempt will be to present a few unconnected observations, applicable only to women of middle and higher classes.

It may reasonably be doubted whether excitement with which a marriage is generally attended, — whether the entertainments, presents, the dresses, form a very suitable accompaniment to the important engagement into which two young persons have entered. Yet in the present state of society this custom is not without its advantages. It seems to afford confirmation of the satisfaction and hope of the parents; their pleasure in the event serves to excuse that of their daughter in quitting them; whilst the tenderness evinced by the whole family, and, above all, her mother's tears, prove to her husband how much she is beloved; this joyous inauguration disposes her to fulfil the hopes excited by the expectation of his reign.

Yet we fear that marriage is not consi-

in a sufficiently serious point of view by the husband; that he does not duly estimate the moral importance of the new situation in which he is placed. In some respects, no doubt, he does feel its importance; he occupies a more prominent place in society; his connections, and frequently also his pecuniary means, are enlarged; and it may be that such considerations have induced him to form an engagement by which there is little risk of his happiness being endangered. He has indeed promised to render his wife happy — but this seems an easy task. All his impressions of her character are so favourable, that he has no fears in leaving her to follow her own inclinations, restraining her as little as is consistent with a proper degree of watchfulness. Hence he makes a liberal provision for her personal expenses, and, unless he finds her deficient in good sense, leaves to her the entire management of his domestic concerns, and troubles himself no further. If she render his home agreeable to him, he is indeed delighted; but he is immersed in business, and has many other resources, so that on this head his wife may be quite free from anxiety. And, at all events, he is always master, *he* has never promised obedience. Surely it is unnecessary to say, that to pursue such a line of conduct is, in a moral point of view, to render marriage completely null.

A woman cannot entirely follow the same plan; yet she may be tempted to consider certain arrangements which have been conceived in a similar spirit, as pleasant and convenient. We need not enter into particulars; but we would say generally, that every thing which tends to give her a separate existence, to make her think of herself independently of her husband, is opposed to those dispositions which would promote their mutual happiness.

Above all, let the wife who has married without feeling any very decided attachment, beware of a secret longing for independence. The temptation to this in her case is so much the stronger, from her not feeling the same anxiety to seize every opportunity of being with her husband. Not being inspired with that ardent affection which makes up for every thing, any trifling difference of opinion which might arise when they are forming plans together will appear more formidable to her. If she be naturally timid, she will be led into a life of acquiescence, devoid alike of pleasure and of duties; if courageous, she may take a delight in advancing alone along a path beset with dangers. In either case she will fail of attaining that happiness which ought to attend married life.

A wife should feel the strongest conviction

that an affection which has begun to languish can be revived only by community of interests, and by mutual sacrifices. We must endeavour to render another happy, as much in order to increase our own attachment to him, as to make ourselves more loved by him; nor is it of less importance that he should seek our happiness as a means of attaching himself more strongly to us.

Never, therefore, allow your husband to be ignorant of your tastes, your occupations, your plans. Set apart no hours for solitude, still less for any exclusive society; never let your door be closed to him; show him all the letters you receive, and those you write also, should he wish it. Let him not imagine it possible that he can interrupt you unseasonably in any of your occupations. Ought he not to be your first object? and should not all your studies and all your employments have reference to him?

Can any situation be more wretched than that of a wife who feels herself an isolated being, though all outward appearances may be kept up? She has no hope, no future; all her prospects are closed in. With what bitter regret does she look back on her former condition; and on the various chances of happiness which were then presented to her! Life was then unburdened by any cares; no dark and

gloomy shade hung over her destiny.' How willingly would she now exchange the boasted privileges of her present state for the pleasing reveries of her youthful days! Yet even this sad destiny is not altogether hopeless; the goodness of God is inexhaustible, and resources at her period of life are numerous. She may still be able to influence her husband, and to improve her own character. It must, however, be acknowledged that this melancholy feeling of isolation is but too often a self-earned punishment. Forgetting that, in the present age, indifference is a much more common fault in a husband than tyranny, a young wife is too apt to pride herself on throwing off the light yoke imposed upon her. But how can she have any pleasure in showing that she is mistress in her own house, in saying *my* house, *my* carriage, *my* servants, and avoiding the use of that delightful *we*, which seems the characteristic symbol of marriage? Is it possible that she can have any pride in manifesting to the world the indifference which he, to whom she has entrusted her happiness, feels toward her, and the imprudence of which she was guilty in thus trusting him?

That mediocrity of fortune which renders the existence of separate interests and plans more difficult, is perhaps to be envied; and

still more should we rejoice in that severity of public opinion which excludes such a separation.

As a husband accompanying his wife into society will naturally be anxious that she should be kindly received, he must himself be her support and guide there, something of a paternal feeling intermingling with his other relation towards her. And what a comfort it must be to her to be sure of meeting with a friendly and protecting look from him, — to see him sometimes approving, sometimes gently admonishing her! But of all such pleasures the wife who aims at independence is deprived.

This voluntary and heartfelt submission cannot be too highly prized by a husband; but, in order to insure its continuance, he must himself pursue a right course. We shall therefore, even at the risk of appearing to depart a little from our general plan, venture to address a few words of advice to him.

In the first place, a husband should always endeavour to conceive what must be the feelings of a young wife. Before marriage, she saw him in the character of a submissive lover; afterwards in that of a joyful husband. And even when he first began to assume that of a master, his tenderness was so great, and he appeared so happy, that she submitted with pleasure to this new authority. He was the

object of her free choice; and now that he displays still greater love and admiration for her, she becomes more and more satisfied with the choice she has made.

But as these bright ideas fade away, the future assumes a colder and darker hue; she experiences a painful disappointment. She may be wrong — she ought perhaps to have been prepared for the change; a husband cannot be expected to be always acting the part of a lover. He is in reality warmly attached to her, but his feelings are become less enthusiastic. Still, however natural such a change may be, we would urge him not to confess it unnecessarily. It will be some consolation to your wife to suppose that you are ignorant of this change; and it would be only a cruel confirmation of your coolness to see that it was noticed by others.

Be assured that every young wife has a store of enthusiastic feelings in her heart; they may be concealed or repressed, but cannot be stifled. As long as they are centred on you they are perfectly innocent; but take care that they do not become a source of pain to her. Respect her feelings of delicacy; conceal from her any former incidents in your life which might distress her: such injudicious confidence would only serve to diminish her own happiness, or her respect for you. In every thing, however,

except your knowledge of the worst parts of human nature, be perfectly unreserved; let her be, as it were, your second self. She will then become really your companion. Do not, from a mistaken generosity, endeavour to conceal the watchful guardianship you exercise over her; but if you disapprove of any thing in her conduct, tell her so openly and gently. Beware of letting a long-suppressed discontent break out at last with anger or rudeness. It is too much to expect that she should always discover your feelings. Truth, affectionately expressed, is a proof of esteem; the more confidence you repose in your wife, the higher you will raise her moral character. In fact, perfect union cannot exist without perfect sincerity.

But even when such a line of conduct is pursued by a husband, the task of a wife is still arduous. She ought as soon as possible fully to understand the obligations she has taken upon herself. She must immediately lay aside all her girlish caprices: she must no longer require those little attentions which, however willingly they were accorded before marriage, might afterwards not only be considered troublesome, but tend to lessen her husband's dignity. Especially must any thing like a scene, or a sentimental reproach, be avoided. That pleasure which so many women

derive from a state of excitement is apt occasionally to produce a storm. A young wife may indeed at first, on such occasions, extort from her husband some lively expressions of affection, but this will not long continue to be the case; and, at last, the only effect of her tears will be to produce cold and cutting remarks. If she be humble and modest, she will consider this as only a just punishment of her folly, and she may still, by the acknowledgment of her error, recal those gentle expressions which had been repressed by the chilling breath of reproach.

A young wife should never forget that men are far from possessing the same romantic ideas as women. Their enthusiastic feelings are in general only transient; gay, lively, and invigorating emotions are more to their taste. If it be true, as we often hear asserted, that it is a woman's duty always to *appear happy in society*, this is still more her duty at home. Gratitude for the most trifling attentions, readiness to excuse any apparent neglect, and that gentle gaiety which diverts the mind from unavoidable vexations, and gives an additional charm to every mark of affection, are qualities far more likely to secure a husband's attachment than all the refinement of an excessive sensibility. Men require either a determined pursuit in which they may interest themselves,

or the enjoyment of a state of moral and physical happiness; and as the choice of an object of pursuit rests with themselves, it is the part of a wife to provide for their daily comfort. This is a positive duty; and though it may at first appear common-place, and perhaps worldly, it is yet the only means she possesses of accomplishing still greater objects.

In marriage, as in many other things, we may in the first instance look for what is ideal, but must afterwards be satisfied with what is but an imperfect approach to it. We may aim at perfection, but must accept what Providence sends us. A wife is too apt to imagine that what is wanting to her happiness arises from her husband; but, whatever he may be, her proper object is to feel satisfied with that destiny which has united her to him. When not only the actions, but the heart and inclination are all in subjection to him, there is nothing servile in obedience; and we believe that in advising the cultivation of a woman's understanding, we have not incurred any risk of lessening her disposition to submit. No doubt her reasoning powers have been strengthened, but we have not by this means been encouraging a useless talent for arguing. All that a wife has to do in order to secure mutual happiness is, to assist her husband when he wishes for her assistance, — to help him as he wishes to

be helped, so long as he requires from her nothing morally wrong.

But suppose a husband should be himself deficient in sense, and should not understand his true interest; still we must accommodate ourselves in the first place to what he considers good, in order to obtain what is really so. Peace must at all events be preserved; discussions which have any tendency to disturb it will alienate both husband and wife from each other, and from God. Besides, we may generally assume the superiority of the man; his understanding, naturally stronger, has been more cultivated by education, and more exercised in the business of life. Any idea that this is not the case would be so painful, and even humiliating to a wife, that we should carefully guard against its being easily admitted into the mind. Nor, indeed, would a truly modest and religious woman ever entertain such a thought. She understands her husband so well, his opinions and feelings seem to her so consistent with his character, that she is grieved at every thing which may happen to annoy him, or to offend his self-love. She may indeed have an indistinct notion of what her own judgment would lead her to do, if left to herself; but she never is left to herself; she exists only for another, and her whole life is an acknowledgment of the sacred right of her hus-

band, and of his claims on her sympathy and tenderness.

Is it then necessary for a wife to renounce all her noblest qualities? Must she give up defending the oppressed, pointing out injustice, or preserving her husband from the effect of his own fatal blindness? Can she indeed assist, if she is never to advise him? Certainly not. Her faculties, however they may have been repressed, burst forth at once with energy at the call of still higher duty. Every thing depends on the integrity of her heart, on the absence of all selfish considerations, and on that affection which, though strong, is often reserved in the expression of its feelings.

There are situations, indeed, in which different duties are opposed to each other, — when the heart is torn by feelings equally strong and equally sacred, and a mother is reduced to the necessity of favouring the interest of her children by every lawful means. But such extreme cases can be considered only in connection with the circumstances which have led to them; and when placed in such difficulties it is from Heaven alone that a woman can seek for aid: human counsel can be of little avail; and there are cases in which it would be wrong to ask it, even of a mother. God alone must be entrusted with such sorrows; and from Him alone can we learn whether it is indeed the ever-

lasting interest of our children, our husband, and ourselves, which forms the subject of our anxiety. Every thing depends, in this instance, on considerations, the greater part of which can hardly be appreciated; but there is one which is so important that it merits especial attention.

What would be the feelings of a virtuous and affectionate wife, if he to whom she had promised to devote herself were unhappy, suffering, perhaps dying, at a distance from her, and yet, offended at the separation which had taken place long before, should be unwilling to receive from her that devotedness which she may now be desirous of showing him? Above all, how would she feel if an eternal barrier should be raised between them by death? Is she aware how difficult she would then find it to palliate to herself any faults of which she may have been guilty towards a husband who is no longer amongst the living?—that her slightest errors will then rise up against her, and that she will, in imagination, be called to appear at a tribunal perhaps even more formidable in her eyes than that of God himself? For her husband never promised forgiveness on repentance,—he never accepted of an expiatory sacrifice, nor has he, like God, a father's pardoning heart.

But to return to a more common situation.

When a truly pious young wife finds herself united to a man entirely devoted to worldly interests, how should she behave? She cannot sympathize in heart and mind with such a being, and there must be a complete barrier between them, unless it can be removed by religious duty. This duty teaches a wife, whilst waiting patiently for eternity, to render her husband happy in the present time, over which alone she has any power. His sympathy will be awakened by the happiness for which he is indebted to her, and this sympathy, being itself of heavenly origin, will hereafter reunite them in the presence of God.

A wife should know that her office is not to dictate, but to inspire. This duty has been pointed out to her by St. Paul,—“ *I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man.*”* The instinctive penetration of her sex easily enables her to discover the weak point in man’s character—his jealousy of authority. No doubt unless she had been assured of his belief in the general doctrines of Christianity, she would not have connected herself with him; but she will soon find out that he will not bear to be preached to: he considers that she is bound to take him as he is, and he feels indignant at the slightest suspicion of a design to

* 1 Timothy, ii. 12.

convert him. We cannot praise the liberality of such sentiments; but they will easily be discovered by a devoted wife: she will humour without condemning them too severely, and will pass over, rather than attempt to controvert them.

But, it may be asked, is this forbearance consistent with strong devotional feeling? We think it is; at least if this feeling be truly Christian. She who possesses it is firmly persuaded that a sincere religious conversion must be the work of God alone; but she may, by her efforts, keep her husband's heart open to gentle influences; she may show him by her example where peace, and consolation, and virtue are to be sought. The rest must be left to time; or rather to that God to whom she prays without ceasing. Favourable opportunities of exerting her influence will arise; some trials—some need of her assistance, will be experienced; above all, that paternal love which tends more than any thing else to promote religious feeling in families will come to her aid: the piety of the children themselves will also assist her endeavours; the Gospel will do its part; and a dry and unfruitful belief will at last be changed into a lively and actuating faith.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE HAPPINESS OF BECOMING A MOTHER.

WHEN we reflect on the number and importance of the advantages possessed by youth, we are sometimes tempted to think that it has been favoured beyond any other period of life. Its forerunner, childhood, is not perhaps a state of so much happiness as we are apt to imagine, deficient, as it necessarily is, in what children esteem the greatest of all privileges—liberty ; and the succeeding periods of life, by gradually depriving us of our most vivid enjoyments, remind us that they lead inevitably to decay and to death.

Rapidly as the period of youth passes away, it seems while it lasts to bestow an accumulation of earthly felicity on woman. The freshness and vivacity of her impressions ; her animated enjoyment of existence ; the newly acquired strength of her faculties ; the sympathy she feels herself and awakens in others ; her eminent power of pleasing ; and the joyous harmony subsisting between her feelings and the objects of nature around her,—all tend to throw a charm over her entrance on this period of life.

And when to these advantages is added the inexpressible delight of being loved,—loved above every thing else; when that existence which has hitherto been of little or no value to others becomes a part of the more active, more noble, more influential existence of a being superior to herself; when she is united to this being for ever, and even the future with all its uncertainty, seems almost under the control of her happy destiny,—is it not indeed enough for so weak a creature? Can she require any addition to such happiness? Yet there is another, even a greater blessing, in store for her. The birth of a child is the most exquisite happiness of all; a happiness almost too great for the powers of enjoyment. She is overwhelmed by the multitude of new sensations crowding upon her, and her soul is bewildered amidst the charms diffused over her existence.

But however desirable it may seem that youth should be especially favoured—that such a rich fund of gratitude towards God should be laid up as may prove a never-failing resource in the day of adversity,—is it equally so that every new pleasure should be then exhausted, and nothing left for after life? A period naturally too short has thus been voluntarily abridged, and by our haste to tie the marriage knot we often stifle sentiments which required time for their developement.

It cannot be in obedience to any divine law that a young woman, who is yet giddy from the tumultuous impressions of new pleasures, marries before she has learnt to know herself, and becomes a mother before she can understand the happiness or the importance of this touching appellation. This undue rapidity in the succession of the most decisive and momentous events in her life cannot fail to produce an unfruitful anxiety, — a physical, but not mental, excitement.

Henceforward the affections also keep pace no longer with the feelings; so true it is that the divine intention is, so to speak, frustrated, and that an enemy has sown tares amongst the wheat. The good, but more tardy seed of devotedness to others, is choked by the precocious seeds of vanity and the love of pleasure. Amidst the bustle of the world, even marriage does not produce the effect it ought to do; the wife becomes a mother before she wishes, and is apt to consider this event as an unwelcome interruption to her enjoyment; and though such unnatural feelings cannot be lasting, many happy hours have been thus lost, many gentle emotions and hopes of future wisdom dissipated.

But how much more satisfactory is it to observe the conduct of a young person who quietly yields to the innocent impressions pro-

duced by the progress of life. Without investing her with any imaginary perfection, or with a degree of piety beyond her age, let us merely suppose her endowed with good sense. In her case the various periods of her existence have gradually succeeded each other; the fruits of education and experience have not been prematurely gathered and laid aside; the various branches of her instruction have been duly proportioned to each other, and have already, in some degree, been applied to the business of life: nature and society, presented to her in all their charms, have given a salutary impulse to her mind. She may indeed, for a moment, have been fascinated by the allurements of the world; but the repetition of the same pleasures for a few successive years has convinced her of their real insipidity. With regard to her success in society, she has ascertained her own level; her place in it, wherever it may be, appears to her fixed, and she aspires to nothing further. The world has no fresh expectations from her, nor she from the world; and therefore its attractions have faded away.

But if, from amongst the unconcerned multitude by whom she is surrounded, some one capable of touching her heart should come forward and devote himself to her for life, then indeed will the greatest earthly happiness be in her power. Her mind will no longer be

distracted ; one fixed, predominant feeling will extend its influence over all her duties, over all the consequences of marriage. She will be truly a mother, because she is truly a wife ; and these two affections will strengthen each other in her heart.

But who can describe the feelings of a young mother ? However lively the hopes on which she has been living, however exquisite the happiness she has pictured to herself, yet when she really possesses that infant which but an instant before did not apparently exist, and which is now destined to furnish occupation for the whole of her future life, her wonder and delight are indescribable : no other occurrence affords an instance of such rapid transition from suffering to joy, — no other blessing appears either so sudden or so miraculous.

It is a severe but salutary dispensation of Providence, which obliges women to purchase the title of mother at the expense of so much suffering. The title itself acquires from this very circumstance a more sacred character ; and a tender pity is associated with the idea of woman, which leads man to respect in the whole sex the image of the mother who gave him birth.

But after the first burst of joy, the feelings of the young mother vary a little, according to the sex of her child ; and so deeply rooted is the idea of man's superiority in dignity and

happiness, that something of regret is mingled with them if the birth of a girl be announced to her. Yet as she contemplates her infant her heart becomes more and more touched: a deep feeling of sympathy, of identity with this fragile being, takes possession of her mind. She trembles lest her child should have to bear the troubles which she has gone through; she determines to make her wiser and better than herself: she shall indeed be an image of herself, but an image approaching much nearer to perfection. To these serious ideas, others of a more cheerful nature succeed, displaying at once the gaiety and the frivolity of the young mother. She looks upon her child as a flower to be cultivated — a doll to be dressed. Some remains of her childish feelings mingle themselves with this commencement of maternal love, and her imagination already revels in the idea of the future success, beauty, and love of this infant.

But if her first child be a boy, his mother's heart is filled with pride; she seems entitled to a higher degree of gratitude; she has given a citizen to the state, a defender to his country, an heir to her husband, and a protector to herself. Yet she cannot fail to be struck by the contrast between these grand titles and the little helpless creature on whom she has bestowed them. Whilst contemplating this frail

treasure, she is agitated by emotions of a very opposite kind; she seems to recognize in him a nature superior to her own, though subjected to a state of temporary humiliation; she anticipates with a feeling of respect the future greatness of this object of present compassion. But whilst still confined to the quiet of her couch, with how many various thoughts is her mind agitated! What a task has she now to perform! How will she be able to accomplish the important duties which are assigned her? From the elevated point of view in which she is now placed, the noblest attributes of human nature are brought under her observation; she must herself possess them all in order that she may communicate them to her child: she longs for a greater degree of piety, that the Spirit of God may sustain and invigorate her, and may also animate the soul of her infant, and incite it to the love of what is good. A strict examination of her own character discovers to her faults which she would fain not transmit to her child; she thus acquires the most powerful motive for correcting them, and innumerable good resolutions are formed and matured in her mind.

One can hardly imagine any influence so favourable to the improvement of the character as that of maternal love. If marriage were not followed by maternity, its ameliorating power

would be comparatively trifling. It would, no doubt, be one step towards self-forgetfulness; but even in the tenderest affection perfect disinterestedness does not exist. It is enough for a husband and wife if they are satisfied with each other; they look only for relative perfection; but when they have a child to bring up, the object they aim at is real, absolute perfection: it is God who is to be satisfied.

The essence of marriage consists so entirely in an affection not only strong, but from its peculiar nature completely exclusive, that without it there can be neither devotedness nor purity. But how beautiful is that maternal love which is capable of being diffused amongst so many without losing any thing of its strength! How does it enlarge the heart of woman, and, from being itself so vast, so powerful, and so disinterested, enable her the better to understand the love of God for his creatures! And as the number of her children increases her mind is continually expanding. There is a stamp of originality impressed on their several countenances, minds, and characters, which at once declares them to be the workmanship of God. She sees more in her children than a mere repetition of two imperfect beings. She recognizes in them various features of the Divine image; a mutilated image, indeed, but one which God himself has given us the means of repairing.

There is still one other advantage attending maternity. Impelled by an indefinable instinct, a wife will sometimes in the presence of her husband throw into the shade many qualities which she possesses, but which more generally fall to the share of man, and will seek only to display the graces of her sex. Her high reasoning powers, her understanding, and her energy remain for a time in obscurity; but no sooner is she called upon to act as a mother than all these qualities come forth. In the defence of her children she will brave the greatest dangers; as the instructress of her son she will inspire him with every manly virtue: patriotism, civil and even military heroism, every thing which tends to the glory of man, will be felt and appreciated by her feminine heart; and she who can at the same time preserve her own most delicate sympathies will present the best possible model of human nature. We may here remark, too, that her wish for greater intellectual developement is not only natural, but must always be respected. As soon as she becomes a mother, her husband is delighted to see how much information she possesses, and how desirous she is to acquire more. Nor is he singular in this feeling. When a woman seeks to increase her knowledge in order that she may be enabled to instruct her child,

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every one is interested in her undertaking, every one encourages her in it. The value of all her virtues and all her talents is enhanced beyond measure, when it is believed that she is to transmit them to her children.

CHAPTER IX.

CONCLUDING PERIOD OF YOUTH.

AT the close of that period during which the young mother who nurses her own children has sometimes felt the continual fatigue almost too much for her strength, a new existence seems to open before her. This season of irregular employment has no doubt been of use: her understanding has been strengthened by retirement; good resolutions have been formed; and when she has recovered her former activity her faculties will appear more fully developed, and she will apply herself with energy to the arduous task which lies before her.

And all her energy will be required; for she is now entering on that period of life when much more important as well as more numerous duties are presented to her. Very young children, who demand constant and watchful care; a husband still in the prime of life, whose feelings, less impetuous than heretofore, require to be sustained by an affectionate confidence; two families, to each of whom attentions must be paid; the arrangements of

her domestic economy ;—surely these duties, to say nothing of those of charity, friendship, and it may be, society, are amply sufficient to exercise all a woman's faculties. She is, however, not easily disheartened ; she has zeal, and she possesses various tastes and feelings which will help her in the discharge of these duties. There seems to her plenty of time for every thing ; for in that season, which may be termed the summer of life, time, like the sun in June, appears to stand still.

In fact, between the age of twenty-four, and the termination of youth, the situation of a woman in society undergoes little change. Younger actors appear successively on the scene and attract attention ; but if she retain her agreeableness, and especially if she prove herself superior to any thing like a spirit of rivalry, she will not only preserve her station in society, but this station will have been confirmed to her by the opinion of the world ; and she will have acquired some additional advantages from that continual developement which is always going on. Her reflections, and the experience she has already gained, will have given a solidity and justness to her reasoning powers, which are seldom found in early youth.

But as a young mother ought not to require society as a necessary resource, we shall leave it out of the question. The most essential

point is, that amidst the various claims upon her time she should properly regulate her course of life.

Having formed to herself a correct idea of the degree of importance attached to her several duties, she must allot to each its due proportion of time. In order to do this she will be obliged to establish rules for the employment of each day ; but we are aware that objections may be raised to this methodical arrangement of her occupations. "Who can foresee," it will be asked, "the occurrences of each day ? When circumstances are so continually changing, how can any one be bound down to the constant performance of the same duties at the same hour ? A more important duty must frequently give way to one which is more urgent."

We are quite ready to admit this ; but as it must be acknowledged that women often consider mere trifles of the greatest importance, and are too apt to be carried away by the feelings of the moment, it follows that even though they may be occasionally required to perform a more pressing duty, the regular course of their general life need not be disturbed by occasional interruptions. The rule they impose on themselves must be flexible, but at the same time elastic ; returning with the greater force to its original form the more it has, *for a time*, been bent out of it.

In further considering this subject, we shall find that particular actions, of minor importance in themselves, sometimes require to be executed at a certain time, whilst others far more necessary, and of much greater importance, are independent of time. Women are very apt to be deceived on this point. Led away by the idea of what is urgent, they neglect what is important, and are not sufficiently careful to guarantee the performance of those duties which must at all events be fulfilled.

Hence it often happens that religious duties, of all others the most sacred, are sacrificed. There is, too often, something to be done instead of worshipping God. He is present every where, and at all times; He is ever to be found; — a reflection which may be beneficial or injurious, according as it encourages or hinders our communion with Him.

The power of habit is of great use in preventing the time allotted to devotion from being encroached on, more than is absolutely necessary, by cases of especial urgency. By imposing rules on ourselves and on those around us, the appointed hour for our devotional duties takes strong hold on the conscience. To be sure, this is making use of mechanical means; but are we not equally machines, when we allow ourselves to be carried away in spite of our better judgment by the temptation of

opportunity, and when the fear of losing the favourable moment for accomplishing some particular object prevents our seeing of how little importance that object is?

Religious exercises may, however, be lengthened according to circumstances. And so it is also with other most important duties, which of themselves might occupy an entire life; but if, after every involuntary omission, we constantly return to the performance of them, this proves that they have a deep and abiding hold on our hearts.

Such ought to be the sacred duties of a wife and a mother. It is wisely ordained that these duties should scarcely ever interfere with each other, and yet in this respect a certain degree of watchfulness is necessary. Conjugal affection, so ardent and devoted in some wives, is in others so weak as to need much cultivation. The less this is felt as an involuntary instinct, the more necessary does it become to bring the will into action.

The plea of necessity may indeed always be urged on behalf of maternal cares. Children must, at whatever sacrifice, be attended to; and a mother who has no deputy must devote herself entirely to them. And when this is necessary her husband himself feels grateful for the cares she bestows on his children. But if he knows that his wife might have assistance,

and finds himself neglected for the sake of mere petty concerns, — if he has no longer a companion to whom he can entrust the thoughts with which his mind is engrossed, he feels himself alone, and, becoming weary of his condition, seeks after some other mode of life.

Let nothing, therefore, prevent your continuing the friend, the companion of your husband; throw aside all frivolous occupations, and raise yourself to his level. It is all very well to make him observe the increasing intelligence and feeling of his youngest children, and enjoy their playful gaiety and infantine charms; but let him see only the poetical side of infancy, not its physical aspect, which cannot fail to be annoying to him. If his employment be so regulated that he has only a certain fixed time to bestow upon you, let him always find you then at liberty, and never allow yourself to lose any of these precious moments of intimate communion. If, on the other hand, he cannot arrange any thing beforehand, be always ready to attend his call; show your children that you give him the preference to every thing else: the high place which you assign to him will in the end be most advantageous to yourself. They will perceive that a supreme authority exists, which rules not only over them, but over you also; and your government will consequently appear to them more gentle.

As regards your daughters especially, the idea of their father's superiority will, without exciting premature expectations, bestow upon them that education, with a view to marriage, which is thought so desirable.

It cannot surely be necessary to remind a mother that much more of her time should be devoted to her children, even to the youngest of them, than what is merely necessary for their physical welfare. Time is requisite in order that she may gain their affection, become well acquainted with their dispositions, and prepare their minds to receive instruction. Let particular hours be set apart for their moral and physical education, and let these be as much as possible preserved from interruption; and let your children also have the benefit of any stray moments which you may have at your disposal.

These moments, however, will often be claimed by other duties; duties which a mother would be apt to neglect, should she undertake, what is indeed in its own nature impossible, to be constantly with her children. Such a plan, too, would be injurious to the children themselves; they will soon acquire a very exaggerated idea of their own importance, and a very low one of the vocation of human beings in general, if they imagine that they are to be considered before every thing else. They can learn the sacred nature of our obligations as human

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beings only by seeing them fulfilled by their mother ; it is therefore her interest to afford them an example in this respect. How can she reckon on their filial love should they ever discover that she has neglected her own parents, who, whatever legal rights they might lose when she married, must ever retain those natural claims upon her which nothing but death can annul? A daughter cannot throw off the duty of devoting herself to them, should they need her assistance. This is indeed a case of imperious necessity ; and we have before shown that the same may be said also of cases of charity. Duties which might at first sight appear quite unconnected with a mother's vocation, seem at once to belong to it when children can be interested in the performance of them. Their improvement is favoured by every good work which is accomplished, by every good impulse which is followed. Herein consists their true moral education.

Hence it becomes especially necessary for a mother to regulate judiciously the employment of her children's time during her own occasional absence ; and in doing this all her foresight will be required. How much judgment and penetration are necessary to enable her to make a good choice of the person to whom she entrusts them at such times ! The attention which is now beginning to be paid to the

education of poor children in schools of various descriptions will, it is hoped, facilitate this choice. Meanwhile it seems to us that a young wife might adopt some plan which would give her a better chance of success in this respect. If, as soon as she looked forward to becoming a mother, she were to take into her household a pupil from one of these schools, and bestow some pains in unfolding her mind and strengthening her good feelings, she would thus easily gain her attachment, and might have some hope of being seconded hereafter in her views. Even should this plan not succeed, the future mother would at any rate gain the advantage of having exercised herself in the art of teaching. She would have been led to reflect on the difficulties of education, and would thus lessen the disadvantage of encountering them all at once, and when there is no time to be lost.

But however successful we may be in our choice of a nurse, there must be some disadvantages attending her constant and anxious attention, in addition to our own. It is not desirable that children should consider the time and thoughts of grown-up people as at their disposal; it is a much more useful lesson to teach them to depend upon themselves: in the first instance for their amusements, and afterwards for the fulfilment of particular duties.

There are few things which require more

good sense than the management of a household. It is no common nor trifling merit to be able to promote the good of all with the least possible sacrifice of time, trouble, and expense. She who governs her house prudently and quietly obtains from her husband, and her whole family, a degree of consideration which qualities, apparently much more striking, would never have procured for her.

The proportion of time required for this purpose must be regulated by difference of situation; and it is of great importance that a proper estimate of it should be made. Every situation involves other duties besides the cares of housekeeping; but in every situation these cares exist; and though possessing apparently few charms, they sometimes engross far too much attention. Hence we find that some wives, when domestic troubles arise, are apt to forget their husbands and children; and that the character of others is rendered harsh by the keen interest they take in these household grievances. This, however, is not so much the case in the higher classes, where an entire neglect of these cares is a much more common fault; a negligence which, setting aside the all-important consideration of economy, is blameable in other respects: it has an injurious effect on the conscience of those who practise it. Abuses ought to be reformed, were it only on

account of that spirit of order and justice on which all morality depends.

Devotion, consisting partly in family worship, and partly in solitary prayer,—the occupations of a wife, a mother, and the mistress of a family ; — these constitute the obligatory duties of each day. Others there are, also obligatory, but not requiring daily observance ; such as those of charity and filial piety. And again there are other employments, not perhaps absolutely necessary, but far too useful to allow of their omission in the arrangement of the duties of life. Unless a young wife keep up her former acquirements, and endeavour to acquire fresh knowledge, she will soon lose all the advantage of the instruction she has received, and will become incapable of educating her children. One of the wisest resolutions a mother can form is, to set apart a certain time for study. But on this subject, depending so much as it must do on circumstances, it is impossible to enter into any details.

How is it possible, in an existence every moment of which is so valuable, to satisfy what are called the claims of society ? How can we allot any place to them in our plans of life ? To these questions we reply, that any thing which is desired by a husband, and is not incompatible with virtue, becomes a duty ; and

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that the going into society, even when not a duty, may often be very desirable. It does not seem expedient that a wife should entirely withdraw herself from that society in which her husband passes much of his time; their common interest, as well as that of her children, seems to require that she should make herself in some degree acquainted with the spirit of the times, by which men are so much influenced; nor would we desire to forbid all amusement to a young mother, even as mere recreation, or as a necessary stimulus; but we must say that she who, amidst such a variety of more noble and interesting resources, languishes for the pleasures of the world, proves herself very unworthy of her high vocation as a mother.

The general principle, then, which we would lay down with regard to the employment of time would be, instead of trusting entirely to ourselves, to acknowledge with humility our natural inconstancy, and to impose upon ourselves certain fixed laws. Such duties as are of daily recurrence may generally be allotted to a certain hour, whilst others will find their place at longer intervals; but all require to be guarded against negligence or fickleness. We might, on every returning Sabbath, enter into a serious examination of the occupations of the past week, and of those which we propose

to ourselves for that which is commencing. This, indeed, is an exercise of piety which should be constantly performed ; and our only reason for particularly recommending it to young mothers is, that at a time when the greatest complexity of duties arises, there is also the greatest necessity for order in the regulation of them. How can we ever feel certain that a single duty is fulfilled, whilst there is nothing methodical in our conduct, but when, on the contrary, we are continually led away by the inclination of the moment ?

When will the value of time, both during the flying season of their youth, and the equally rapid periods which succeed, be duly appreciated by women ? The importance of our external existence may diminish ; but for our internal existence, — for our own safety, how precious are the years, the days, the hours of this life ! Who can say what portion of eternity may depend on each hour of our present existence ? No one can answer this question, for no measurement of spaces is applicable to eternity ; every thing there is without limits. How appalling would this thought be, were it not equally true that every hour may also be made the means of preparing us for a happy futurity. Let us, therefore, welcome and reverence these hours as blessings from Heaven, and let it be our anxious care that none of them shall here-

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after accuse us. Each arrives with a command from God to be executed, and then passes on into the depths of eternity, there to bear witness for or against us.*

CONCLUSION.

We have now arrived at the termination of the period of youth; we have done with its affections, its impressions, its ever fresh hopes.' Life has given all it has to bestow, and nothing is now to be expected but either a repetition of its blessings, or, it may be, a series of unknown griefs. But if the soul, sustained by Divine aid, make such use of the education it has received from the natural course of events as to favour its eternal welfare, it will be constantly advancing towards moral perfection; and since, according to the Apostle, "*all things work together for good to those who love God,*" let us see what may be the result of their conjoint operation during youth.

The first effect of life must have been an

* "Hours have wings, and, every moment, fly up to the Author of time, and carry news of our usage; all our prayers cannot entreat one of them either to return, or slacken his pace; the mis-spense of every minute is a new record against us in heaven. Surely if we thought thus, we would dismiss them with better reports; and not suffer them either to go away empty-handed, or laden with dangerous intelligence." — BISHOP HALL.

immense developement both of the intellect and of the affections. Innumerable objects connected with our necessities have excited and exercised all the mental faculties; and those of the heart have also acquired fresh energy, if woman have duly responded to the two appeals successively made to her by Providence, — that which has led her to renounce her liberty by marrying, and that which has excited in her breast an emotion of unknown joy at the sight of her first-born. The effect of these two appeals must be the same; each must tend to remove the common centre of the affections far beyond the sphere of self. Maternal love, the most disinterested of all feelings, appears especially calculated to lead to entire self-forgetfulness. But there is here a degree of delusion; the griefs and the pleasures of maternal solicitude, when carried to an extreme, partake in some measure of a selfish feeling. God does not choose to take us entirely out of ourselves, except to draw us nearer to Himself; and this, we must hope, will be the result of the last education of life.

And the preparation for this result has been long going on. The seeds of piety were sown at an early age, but sensible and worldly objects were then ruling in all their power. Religion, by invigorating the moral faculties, favoured a happy progress in the career of life.

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acting at once as a curb and as a spur, she bestowed on the soul, even in this life, zeal to fulfil duty, motives to resist temptation, consolation in trouble, tender and elevated feelings. But the soul was not created for this life alone; and as the objects which favour its development constitute also the bonds attaching it to a world which it must leave, it becomes necessary to remove them. After the education of blessings, that of privations begins. We were gainers by what we received, but we are much greater gainers by what we lose; since, in proportion as other things are taken from us, God reveals Himself to us more immediately.

BOOK III.

MATURE AND ADVANCED AGE.

CHAPTER I.

COMMENCEMENT OF MATURE AGE.

THE first years of the period we are now about to consider can scarcely be said to belong to mature age; yet we are at a loss what name to bestow on that time of life which follows immediately on youth. The faculties of woman are still in all their vigour; it is in her appearance alone that a slight decline of brilliancy is perceptible. But can a new era in the destiny of an immortal being be marked by a change so insignificant in itself? Yet so has the world decided; and she only who is not of the world can avoid experiencing at this time a feeling of melancholy at the downfall of her hopes.

If the termination of youth in women is to be decided by the diminution of their external charms, it can never be fixed beforehand; but when they have once attained the age of thirty, they should be constantly prepared for passing into a different situation from what they have

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hitherto occupied, and for entering on a period in which the progress of time is much less apparent. Unless rendered more rapid by accidental circumstances, the advance towards maturity is almost imperceptible. Women differ so much in external advantages, and in their liability to be affected by time, that it is not always easy to assign any particular age to them. Their estimation in their family and in society is determined by the activity, intelligence, and agreeable qualities they have preserved, and the date of their birth is forgotten. We shall therefore, in our remarks, avoid designating any particular epoch, and, without making use of those delicately worded expressions which by turns point out, or conceal the progress of time, shall consider that we are speaking of women who, though still in the full enjoyment of all their powers, can no longer have any pretensions to youth.

If we take a general view of the course of life, it is evident that, during the first half of it, the prospects of women are far more agreeable than those of men. The anxiety of choosing a profession, the dry and laborious preparation which it requires, and afterwards the difficulties attending the entrance on its duties, afford a distasteful contrast to the natural inclinations of young men. On the other hand, the youth of women is more poetical;

a pleasing harmony seems to exist between their wishes and their destiny. But when the spring-time of life is once over, the scene changes. Men have overcome the obstacles which are at first presented by every vocation, and a prospect of continually increasing success is opened before them. They flatter themselves with the hope of advancing rapidly along the paths of ambition, fortune, or glory. In whatever direction they view the future, it appears decked in the brightest colours; and even should their tastes change, they retain their liberty.

But how differently must women look upon their lot, at least as long as they regard it only in a superficial point of view! They have either exhausted, or it is now time for them to renounce, their most lively pleasures; all they can look forward to is the repetition of impressions which are continually growing more feeble. At the very moment when their faculties, from being more completely developed, become capable of comprehending a greater variety of objects, the world, with its promises, is withdrawn from them. Their soul still retains all its youthful vigour; and having lived more regularly, and associated less with persons of depraved habits, they have preserved a warmth of feeling, a vivacity of imagination, which men seldom possess at the same age.

Yet the very moment when they begin really to live, — when, recovering from their previous giddiness, they walk more steadily, and possess better-founded and more rational hopes of success, is exactly the moment when they complain that they are less sought after in society, and that even their domestic circle has become less interesting.

Such complaints are, no doubt, proofs of a trifling mind, ignorant of its true destination; but why is it that they are so common? Because it is on their external charms alone that women have been taught to depend for success, and their moral condition has been almost entirely neglected. At eighteen, when every thing except beauty is still so imperfect, when neither their physical nor their moral strength has attained its highest point, they are married. Hence their frequent want of all elevation of mind, and their conviction of the all-powerful effect of beauty; and hence also the weariness, the vacuity, the regrets, and sometimes the errors of women, who have reached that dangerous point where the road turns, and a totally different prospect opens on them.

In thus speaking, we are far from accusing either Providence, or the general laws of society. It is not intended that woman should feel the loss of youth so keenly; and the existing order of things might be turned to much greater ad-

vantage; but the infatuation of man, and the frivolity of mothers, have given the predominance to inferior qualities. Formed for loving, women have been led to believe that it was to beauty alone they must trust for the happiness of inspiring, and consequently of experiencing, any tender emotions. Hence those outward accomplishments, which should at best have been regarded only as the means, have become the chief object; and vanity, the most selfish of all motives, has become the ruling passion.

But such a disposition is dearly purchased in the end. The woman whose views in marrying have been entirely confined to the glory of the conquest, carries the same feelings into the whole course of her life; in every thing considering only the effect produced on others. If her children are pretty and graceful, she regards them as ornamental appendages: her self-esteem, too, is flattered by the attachment of her husband, or by the distinction he enjoys; and as long as her pleasure in these things is still fresh, she does not perceive the advances of age; but when, after walking for a short time on the level summit of life, she suddenly finds herself in the declivity, a painful change takes place in her feelings.

From this summit of life she seems to take in her whole destiny at one glance. The past

offers nothing but regrets, and the future appears to her a wide and dreary waste, presenting no distinct objects, nothing from which she can promise herself any pleasure. Could we know what the greater number of frivolous women think of their condition, we should find that even the most favourable circumstances of their life — their social position, their children, their lot as wives — every thing, in short, has lost its value in their eyes, now that they are no longer young. Their several grievances may differ in some respects, but all have one subject of regret in common; all are obliged to renounce many of their pleasures; all feel that the attention they receive is no longer what it was. They are wearied of the world, but afraid of retiring from it. What is to be done?

Such being the mistakes into which women are apt to be led by an undue self-esteem, surely it ought no longer to be their guide. What resources does it offer them when they begin to discover that their personal charms are on the wane? Only such as are for effect; they are still desirous of acting some part or other. In times of political excitement they enter keenly into their husbands' interests, and even sometimes attempt to influence his conduct, and in so doing commit innumerable blunders.

Let it not be supposed, however, that we wish to reduce women to silence in society, even when political questions are discussed. They are charged with a mission of peace and conciliation; and when impelled by a conscientious feeling to uphold the sacred claims of justice and charity, their influence is often most salutary. They alone possess that valuable tact which, by a single word, recalls good taste, reason, and humanity; and when advanced in life, they have both the right and the power to check, with gentle authority, the errors of younger women. In their presence no giddy young creature will venture to express that tender indulgence for suicide, that admiration of duels, or that taste for corrupt literature, which would be treated by them with the utmost contempt. But in order to inspire respect without disturbing the ease of society, there must be a deep moral feeling, and an entire absence of every selfish motive.

It cannot be denied that the transition from youth to maturity is not easily made. To a truly pious woman, however, or to one who loves, whose heart is filled with tender affections, this change is not difficult. But as no human being can be said to be entirely free from some degree of egotism and vanity, all ought to watch carefully over themselves. We must beware of being disheartened and depressed.

It is not enough to be wearied of the world, to feel the void which is left by its deceitful pleasures, — the heart must be reanimated by the love of God, and of our neighbour.

Let us not, however, despair even of a character in which these noble feelings seem lost; for the goodness of the Almighty is infinite. If a woman who has passed the season of youth, and feels wearied of her existence, would view her situation with impartiality, she would perceive that her fancied indifference to every thing is not real. She is no longer pleased with the world, because the world has become regardless of her remaining charms; but let her once more receive its homage, and she will delight in it more than ever. That vanity on which she has hitherto existed languishes for want of food; and hence arises a moral decay, a real disease, to be cured only by the most persevering watchfulness. But how are the decision and strength of mind required for this cure to be obtained?

Here we find the advantage of those religious principles which were inculcated in childhood. They have not, indeed, produced all the fruit which might have been expected; the heart, which should have been warmed by them, has been chilled by its intercourse with the world. But she who regrets the loss of her former religious fervour knows, at least, that she *has*

lost it : she cannot feel surprised that the God whom she has addressed only with indifference should have left her to herself ; but she is not aware how willing He still is to assist her. He is desirous at all times to draw her to Himself ; He is at all times her Saviour. If her love for Him be cold, let her pray to Him to increase it ; if her faith be weak, let her beseech Him to strengthen it. Let her follow with perseverance the path pointed out in the Gospel, and it will not be long before the love of duty will be revived in her breast, and be accompanied by the love of life. That future, which her imagination had pictured only as a season of decay, will now appear to her a season of progressive improvement.

It may at first sight seem a little strange that, in the arrangement of the events of a woman's life, her faculties should attain their highest point at the very time when so many objects of interest are withdrawn from her. But we cannot doubt that this dispensation is wise and benevolent ; we recognize therein the never-failing goodness of the Deity. Is it not from these very objects of interest, the deprivation of which by many women is so keenly felt, that they are exposed to such manifold temptations ? Having all their wishes anticipated, and assured of receiving on every occasion either indulgence or approval, they considered all around them as

admirers. Surely it was high time that such flattering deceptions should give way to a system of truth, and that a woman should rely less on the effect of her charms, and more on that of her moral qualities. The time is now arrived for her to give, instead of always receiving; a life of activity, of devotedness to others, is now her only resource; and unless she can occupy herself in some generous or useful pursuit, she must sink into utter insignificance. Youth, from its craving for success, for excitement, for tender emotions, is so constantly desirous of pleasing, that it is only too apt to forget God. But having arrived at an age when we please less, and on that very account are less loved, we must needs return to religion. And what does she then say to us? She tells us to devote ourselves to others for their good alone, looking to God only for our reward.

As it is not possible to divide into definite portions that long period of life which embraces the whole of maturity, — a period in which woman's power of doing good has been diminished only in some trifling respects, — we shall content ourselves with addressing the same advice to all.

And, first, we would say, pray to God to deliver you from vanity, and seek in religion a constantly increasing support; you will thus

avoid every opportunity of reviving your vanity, and your hopes will be founded only on resources independent of the opinion of others.

In the next place, beseech God to lessen in you that ardent and insatiable craving for affection with which your heart has hitherto been filled. When your prayers on this subject have been heard, and the eager desires of youth are calmed, you will acquire a freedom of thought and action as yet unknown to you, but a freedom accompanied by humility and resignation to the will of God. And in order that this tranquillity may continue, lay out for yourself a life of active occupation, allowing no time for the indulgence of the imagination. If possible, have some one chief object — some work to execute — which will employ all your leisure hours, in order that neither your time nor your thoughts may be wasted in a variety of futile undertakings.

Happy she whom the goodness of God has surrounded with so many domestic interests that her occupations lie in her own family! Though her duties may be various, we shall, in the remarks we are about to make, consider her only in her maternal relation. It is as a mother that she will exercise the greatest influence on others, and make the greatest advances towards the perfecting of her own

character. But to some women the maternal vocation is denied, and to none does it afford occupation for the whole of life.

Of the twenty, or five and twenty years of a mother's active cares for her children, the first ten or twelve have perhaps passed while she was yet young; and when the later years of this period have also elapsed, those tender affections with which she is still animated having no longer any obligatory employment, often serve only to make her feel still more the present void in her existence. The exercise of charity, on the other hand, in all its different branches, affords employment for every age, and almost every variety of disposition. In considering this subject we are led to advert to those unmarried females whom we may seem to have forgotten, and we shall perhaps find that their lives, so tranquil, so entirely devoted to others, are far from being devoid of happiness.

At the same time the dispositions and characters of women are infinitely diversified; and as, from the state of dependence in which they live, many paths which would seem to be open to them are not so in reality, we must, in order to secure them from a life of listlessness, endeavour to furnish them with a variety of resources. We would, therefore, in such cases as do not allow of their rendering themselves useful in

active life, recommend to them intellectual cultivation as an inexhaustible mine of valuable occupations. No doubt it is desirable that they should already have been prepared, by early solid instruction, for such occupations ; but we believe that any person of good sense is capable of acquiring a relish for them.

What we understand by this last-mentioned resource will be explained hereafter ; but it cannot for a moment be supposed that we would encourage any vainglorious display in women of mature age.

CHAPTER II.

MIDDLE AGE. — MATERNAL DUTIES.

IN our present remarks on the maternal vocation we shall consider children only as adjuncts, — as unconscious agents in the perfecting of their mother's character, which goes on improving in proportion to the care she bestows on their education. In order to promote their progress in piety, wisdom, and knowledge, she must herself be continually advancing in these attributes. Her situation is, perhaps, of all others that in which the necessity of self-watchfulness is most deeply felt. What a blessing is that irrepressible love which seems to spring up in a mother's breast, on purpose to urge her on towards the final end of her existence! Why should a feeling so energetic ever remain unfruitful, uselessly agitating a weak mind, without inducing it to form any salutary resolutions?

When the ardent feelings of youth are in some measure subdued, those maternal emotions which were at first so rapturous also become more tranquil. Then it is that a mother — hitherto so free from any thing like

care — when called upon to begin the task of instructing her daughters, finds her courage unequal to the undertaking. Prepossessed with the idea of her own incapacity, she endeavours to obtain a substitute, or entrusts her daughters to some establishment for education ; and even imagines that in so doing she is consulting not only her own interest, but that of her children. It would have been her greatest happiness, she declares, to keep her daughters at home ; but, with her own ignorance on many subjects, she feels that she could not educate them properly, could not bestow upon them those accomplishments which she sees acquired by young people who have been brought up at school. Such scruples are, no doubt, often sincere ; but they are not in general well founded. A truly religious mother would feel very differently. Except under particular and uncontrollable circumstances, she would never venture to confide to strangers the children whom God has entrusted to her : He has entrusted them to her in spite of all her faults, which must be known to Him ; but He has, at the same time, endowed her with a feeling of energy which forbids her to separate herself from them.

And how painful must such a separation always be to a mother ! She sends her child into a world where all the natural relations are

destroyed; where no ties of consanguinity, no domestic interests exist; where there is indeed a governess, but no mother; and where the feared, yet loved authority of a father, is always wanting: where, too, a pure and holy idea of marriage can scarcely be acquired, as children never witness the reciprocal affection of a husband and wife advanced in life, with whom this sacred union assumes a still more exalted character. And the girl who thus sees her own mother voluntarily giving up to others the care of her daughter's education, cannot but be ill prepared for taking upon herself a mother's duties.

But this is not all. There is a still greater evil to be dreaded by a religious mother. She dreads that spirit of rivalry naturally existing where so many girls are collected together, and still farther excited by the stimulants constantly employed in these establishments. The same machinery by which emulation is excited in boys' schools is brought into play, and with far more pernicious effect; for whilst so many different careers are opened to men, one only is presented to women. All are anxious to please, all desire the same success; they consider as rivals all who possess any means of exciting admiration. Hence it is that so much bitterness and envy, so many secret heart-burnings exist; and hence too a deterioration of

mind, which even faults more generally dreaded do not always produce.*

Amongst the various motives which ought to induce a mother to take upon herself the important task of education, we hardly venture to mention her own improvement; and still less the necessity, at her age, of some one principal occupation. Such reasons might appear too selfish; and we would therefore speak only of the advantage to her daughters. We would point out to her that as God has placed the duties and happiness of a woman in her own family, it is for her family that she ought to be educated. We should be careful not to allow a link to be broken in that hallowed chain of devotedness, which, passing from generation to generation, transmits to future wives and mothers a treasury of pure feelings.

Every mother, no doubt, has faults and deficiencies; but has she not also an ample compensation for these, — an inexhaustible tenderness, which leads her to the living Source of all our blessings? Even should her piety become languid, maternal love is destined by God to

* In speaking of the disadvantages of female schools, we must be understood as comparing them with an education conducted by a good mother; for it cannot be denied that these establishments are not only indispensable in the general order of things, but that in particular circumstances they afford a most valuable resource.

reanimate it. How can her prayers be wanting in fervour, when it is for her children that they are offered up? When we look on these frail beings, liable from their delicate organization to so much suffering, — when we reflect on their responsible and immortal souls, as yet so weak and so easily led astray, we at once perceive that our only hope is in God. We feel that we ourselves, our children, our will, our souls, are in His hand who rules over all; and yielding up ourselves to his protection, we are persuaded that the same Divine goodness which has bestowed our children upon us will be extended over them and bless them.

The mother, who acknowledges every thing as the gift of God, will not despair of her own powers; or rather she will in nothing rely entirely on herself: she will forget herself. She considers herself only an instrument, and she rejoices that she is so. Her task will be all the better done from its not depending on herself alone for its performance. High-minded principles, of which she has hitherto had only a confused idea, become now clear and strong in her mind. Even her faults, the errors she may have committed, are no hinderance to the accomplishment of her work; she is not ashamed of recommending to her children virtues which she has herself neglected to practise, duties which she has not fulfilled.

She feels that she has a sort of apostolic mission to accomplish, and she is urged on to enforce the most important truths without being arrested by a humiliating reference to her own feelings. How powerfully do the strongest actuating principles of our nature — religion and maternal love — promote the formation of morality !

But, it may be asked, will this be the case with regard to other things? — will these great motives be equally capable of increasing a mother's knowledge and her intellectual acquirements? for it is in these respects that she feels herself the most unequal to the task of education. We still repeat, let her trust in God. Even in this case, assistance, internal or external, will be granted her, and she will be spared the necessity of separating herself from her daughters, and removing them from under the paternal roof. For, in the first place, as the arrangement of their studies will be in her own power, she will always be able to keep in advance of them, and to acquire the knowledge she most needs. By these means she will retain for some time her superiority in acquirements as well as in age. She may afterwards accompany them a certain way in their progress; and when at last they pass beyond her, and the assistance of masters becomes necessary, she may, by taking lessons with them, both assist and encourage them. In so doing she has then only their in-

terest in view; but she little knows how valuable the habit of application thus acquired may hereafter become to her, when she is left, by the rapid flight of time, in a state of isolation.

The religious instruction, especially, which her daughters receive from others may be particularly useful to herself. By being present, without taking any part in it, she will become acquainted with their opinions and ideas, and will thus be enabled afterwards to give to the instruction they have received a more precise and individual direction. And how delightful will these unreserved conversations be both to her and to them!

It may be observed, too, that a mother who passes her life surrounded by her daughters is more likely to retain the affection of her husband. By her wish to make all around her happy, she herself preserves that serenity and cheerfulness always so pleasing to the other sex. Thanks to her endeavours, his home is rendered agreeable; the charms of conversation and the sallies of a lively imagination are encouraged; pleasures of a quiet nature are habitually going on, and on particular occasions amusements of a more exciting kind are invented. She considers such occasions as affording a favourable opportunity of paying a tribute of gratitude to that God who is the bestower of all our pleasures. The older members of the family seem

by such incidents to be restored for a time to the vigour of youth ; and to all they afford a temporary relief from worldly cares, and from the mechanical routine of daily occupations.

We must not, however, overcharge the picture of the happiness of domestic life. Experience would too often be at hand to contradict us. Yet how beautiful do its features appear when we take only a general view of them ! What can be more delightful than to spend our life amidst a circle of friends on whom we can entirely rely, who are inspired by an involuntary affection, rendered still more sacred by the idea of its being a duty ? Add to this, that it is the interest of all to render each other happy, and to persevere in the right path, and we can hardly imagine any situation in which so many of the elements of happiness are combined. Happiness here, as in so many other situations, is frequently and in various ways alloyed by the misfortunes common to our nature ; but is there any condition of life exempt from these ? and is there any other equally capable of preserving us from the evils consequent on our own misconduct ?

In spite of all the errors to which a mother is liable in educating her daughter, her aspirations after what is right are so constant, that her efforts cannot to fail to have a favourable influence on her own character. And this is

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especially the case when she is not embarrassed by a complexity of motives, or by any struggles of conscience. But should a truly religious mother consider it her duty to introduce her daughter into the world, the progressive improvement in her own character will be arrested by her mental anxiety. Having spent some years in comparative retirement, she will often feel disgusted with society and its frivolities. Its amusements will appear to her senseless, hardly justifiable, and ill suited even to the natural gaiety of youth. Forgetting how differently every thing appeared to her at her daughter's age, she now sees nothing but vanity, luxury, coquetry, and jealousies; and attributing to a greater advance towards perfection what is often only the effect of less natural simplicity, she is apt to agitate and distress the pure mind of her daughter, and to impress her with the idea of an unknown evil, without communicating to her any salutary impulse.

But when a mother introduces her daughter into society, she most likely wishes that she should acquire by experience some knowledge of life; and she would therefore, we think, act more wisely in allowing her quietly to obtain this experience. The slight and transient impressions of youth are often strengthened from the importance attached to them by older people. Above all, do not, by way of counteracting the

effect of worldly pleasures, distress and humble your child. It may be that God will hereafter, by means of some little disappointment, lead her insensibly to withdraw from the world and repose her wearied spirit on Him ; but He alone can do this. Any human voice, even that of a mother, will irritate but not correct, and may substitute a permanent for a temporary evil.

Again, we sometimes find a mother resuming all her former vanity when she sees her daughter in the midst of a brilliant circle. After fearing, perhaps, in the first instance lest the world should have too many charms for her child, she soon begins to fear lest her child should not have charms enough for the world ; and by these distracting and opposing thoughts she is led into continual inconsistencies of conduct.

Thus it is, that by this late experience of life afforded us by our children, we learn to judge of ourselves with impartiality. In retirement we are apt to be deceived in our self-estimation ; but when excited by more active interests, we perceive that our progress as yet is far from what it should be. Returning, then, with increased humility to God, we become reconciled to the idea of our children also undergoing some trials. Having taken every precaution that wisdom could suggest, we are not troubled at the effect of such scenes as are calculated to display their dispositions. If we have inspired

them with a genuine feeling of piety, it is desirable that they should thus learn to know themselves.

Such considerations, however, are allowable only after the events which were at our disposal have taken place. Human prudence must never be neglected during the time of deliberation ; for though its short-sighted and confused views cannot penetrate beyond the threshold of eternity, it can form a tolerable judgment of the events of this life ; and during this life parents are responsible for their children. The anxieties, therefore, of a mother, when her daughter is about to be married, are very natural ; and though frequently too keen, and too much influenced by worldly feelings, they may sometimes, from this very circumstance, enlighten her as to the consequences of any particular prepossession. An imagination so easily alarmed may serve as a counteraction to that natural partiality which a mother feels for the man who is attached to her daughter.

It is a satisfaction to her to determine the destiny of her child ; to entrust her to the care of a younger and more vigorous protector. Her task as a mother is accomplished ; and her heart begins to feel the soothing though melancholy security of old age. After parting with her last daughter, the brilliant tints of life pass off into a soberer hue ; but if her husband be yet

spared to her, she still possesses an object for the exercise of devoted affection. Notwithstanding all the modifications which may be brought about by time, there is no relationship which suffers so little from its passage through life as that of a wife. In this holy connection a woman enjoys the happiness of being still needed; her maternal vocation, on the other hand, seldom offers more than a reflection of the past.

The influence of the past on the present is indeed generally very great when women are no longer young. Their fate was decided in years long since gone by, and their present happiness depends on the feelings then fostered. At an age when she has no longer any thing to hope for herself, what an advantage it is for a mother to be able to divest herself of all personal considerations! She can then rejoice when she sees her beloved daughter's affection transferred to another; she can resign her influence over her without regret, and learn to take an interest in events which are decided without any reference to her judgment. Requiring no extraordinary proofs of love from her children, she has their truest affection. Her ever ready sympathy, her experience, her devotion to their interests, all lead them to have recourse to her for assistance and consolation in their hour

of need. She continues the centre of all the domestic concerns, preserving harmony, and exercising a regulating power in the family circle. Yet the idea of such influence, uncertain too as it must be, ought not to engage the thoughts of a woman as she advances in life. The hope of still acting an important part might be apt to revive her self-love, and would be at variance with the spirit by which she ought to be actuated.

We might follow a mother still farther in her career — might show how she is sometimes called upon to resume her active duties, and to take the place of her daughter in educating her grandchildren. But it would be almost impossible to disentangle the complexities of this second set of relations, which presents the maternal vocation to us under a gentle and deceitful form, — when we seldom venture to express our affection by actions, and must ourselves respect, and cause to be respected by others, the superior authority of parents who are our own children. Amidst such a variety of obstacles, how much prudence and judgment are necessary in order to produce any good effect! Nothing but a total freedom from selfishness can preserve us from that culpable weakness which so often makes a grandmother careless both as to the means she employs, and

as to the effect of her indulgence, provided she can make herself loved.

In most of the relations of life the interests of older women are little more than a participation in the interests of those who are younger. Events, by which they themselves were for a long time agitated, are again taking place before them, and their sympathy is again excited. But the effect of these wordly scenes becomes daily less powerful, and before long gives way to a feeling of solitariness, which is now to become the subject of our attentive consideration.

For it cannot be denied that even mothers are not exempt from that isolation which is the lot of most women when advanced in years. Their children are dispersed — the several vocations, the mode of life, the tastes of the young, no longer harmonize with the habits of age, and they separate, though retaining all their affection for each other. Hence solitude, either of situation, or of the heart, becomes the lot of many women, and is too often accompanied by a feeling of depression, if not of unhappiness. But our object is to show them that they still possess great resources; that even in the most desolate state God does not abandon them; and that the moral developement, of which they are always

susceptible, may prove the source of innumerable and hitherto unimagined interests. Such things as the *eye hath not seen, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive*, have been promised by God himself to those who love him.

CHAPTER III.

OBSERVATIONS ON MIDDLE LIFE CONTINUED. — ON
THE EXERCISE OF CHARITY AS AN OCCUPATION
FOR WOMEN.

CHARITY, in the most enlarged meaning of the word, is a feeling with which woman is more particularly inspired; it is never absent from her breast. It accompanies her into society when she there seeks to tranquillize her agitated mind, or to divert the painful emotions of her heart; and even in her own home, where the engrossing nature of individual affection might seem to leave no room for a more comprehensive feeling, its gentle character is recognized. It corrects disproportionate attachments, tempers our feelings when too ardent, and softens them when too bitter and irritating.

But we are not now called upon to consider charity in this wide sense. The feeling which is common to every condition of life, — which *beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things*; — this charity ought to be the soul of our existence, and our present object is to give it a proper direction. We are desirous of drawing the attention of women to one principal occupation, which may prove a source of

interest to them in the absence of more urgent duties. Charity will then assume the character of benevolence ; at least, if we bestow on this word a decidedly religious meaning, and if, amongst the other benefits which it seeks to impart, the sanctification of the soul be included.

This is not an age which is deficient in external acts of beneficence ; but it is deficient in that spirit which should be infused by Christianity. Excited by mere worldly motives, beneficence has become more and more distinct from charity ; occupied solely with the relief of physical wants, the moral condition of its objects, their mental distresses, have been overlooked ; and in thus forgetting its religious vocation, it has lost its soothing and consolatory influence.

Yet the sacred character of charity might, by the assistance of truly religious women, be once more restored to benevolence. They seem peculiarly fitted for communicating a feeling of mutual sympathy amongst the children of one common Father, whose love extends alike over all.

If we desire to improve the moral condition of the poor, we must, no doubt, begin by relieving their bodily wants. It is therefore the duty — the urgent and indispensable duty of the rich, to be liberal in their assistance to the poor ; and as women have not only the

most time at their disposal, but are generally the best inclined, the best suited by their disposition for the office of relieving distress of every kind, why should not their assistance be sought in the performance of this common duty?

How this duty is to be performed is a great, and hitherto unconquered difficulty. Though all public charities are unavoidably attended with many and great disadvantages, yet we fear they are necessary. In the present state of society, private charity would not be either sufficiently certain, or sufficiently abundant. Individuals distrust themselves. Feeling that they are apt to be partial, their charity is either scanty or unseasonable; and it would almost seem desirable that it should for some time be confined to assisting institutions already established. But would it not be an improvement to such institutions if they could be made more nearly to resemble private charity in their manner of bestowing relief?

We are far from desiring any public function for women; but in those countries where the charitable institutions are under no legal restraint, it would seem that women might constitute a very valuable medium of communication between the administrators of the charity, who are bound by strict rules, and the unhappy beings who are the objects of it. Knowing

how easily their compassion is excited and their confidence gained, it might not perhaps be expedient to leave to them the apportioning of the funds; but if the nature and amount of the assistance to be given were fixed, might they not be the distributors of it? Acting as representatives of the wealthier classes, they would thus be the means of impressing a more pleasing idea of these classes on the minds of their poorer brethren; and how much good would they themselves effect by frequenting the cottages of the poor!

Nothing is less regular in its manifestation than the feeling of gratitude. It depends not so much on the extent of the benefit conferred, as on the kindness of heart by which it has been prompted. It is seldom excited by hearing of a number of persons having joined together for the support of some charitable institution; but let an individual show a real interest in his poor neighbours, and sympathize in their troubles, and it is immediately inspired. And woman, particularly, when commissioned to carry assistance to them, would do it with a delicacy and gentleness which could not fail to excite feelings of gratitude. A caress bestowed on their children, or a trifle added by herself to the aid she brings from the public fund, would at once gain their affection. Women understand how to give pleasure, which

is quite a different thing from giving alms, but perhaps even more efficacious in touching the heart.*

It would seem as if in one very important respect a greater degree of liberty had been granted to women than to men; perhaps as a sort of compensation for the other numerous restraints imposed upon them. They feel much less awkwardness in attempting to relieve mental distresses. A sort of tacit understanding, perhaps a certain bluntness of character, prevents men from inquiring into those griefs which spring from the heart. They neither express, nor suppose these. Women alone are able to speak of their feelings; can relate what consolation in their distress, what aid in their trials, they have derived from their trust in the goodness of God. And thus a feeling of sympathy is at once excited between the children of the same Heavenly Father. And what an opportunity is thus afforded of leading the poor to love the Holy Scriptures,—of pointing out to them the consoling promises therein contained, and of convincing them that they have indeed a Saviour!

Without waiting for an official appointment, women have obeyed the dictates of con-

* "He thanked me much for what I said ~~was sent~~.
But I knew well his thanks were for my
Philip Voss

science; and various charitable associations have been formed by their efforts. Many, from every situation in life, have given a helping hand to them, as far as their maternal and other domestic duties would allow; but the most active part has naturally been assigned to unmarried women. Here they have found their true vocation;—a generous and useful employment for an existence unfettered by the claims of more imperative duties. Why should they be discouraged in these noble occupations, whence so much good must ensue both to themselves and others? Men have, no doubt, a right to prevent their wives and daughters from joining associations if they do not approve of them; but surely unmarried women, who are past the period of youth, may be independent of their control.

Less shackled than any other human beings by worldly chains, an unmarried woman is, more than any other, to be regarded as an immortal being;—more directly in communion with her God. Oh, let her enjoy the melancholy privilege of her solitary state and her loss of youth! Let her use this privilege modestly, but do not prevent her using it. At every age her character as a woman imposes a degree of reserve on her conduct: a respect for the usages of society must be maintained; but let it be free from any admixture of fear. Let

not humility be used as an excuse for indolence; and, above all, let it not be brought forward as a cloak for that personal sensitiveness which is wounded by the slightest notice. The dignity of mature age consists not so much in avoiding observation, as in not supposing that we are observed. She who thinks only of acting as in the sight of God, will neither wish nor care to be seen by others.

Faithful to their vocation, women, married as well as single, have joined together in bestowing their chief interest on the very young children of the poorer classes; and in the schools established for them, both that instinct which is natural to all women, and that experience which is peculiar to mothers, will always find useful employment. But it should never be forgotten that a woman's influence is entirely personal; and unless this influence be judiciously distributed in these associations, their time will be wasted. To very young children especially an individual influence of this kind is quite necessary.

Here we see the application of that great principle which has been insisted on by Chalmers. In his opinion an undertaking must be narrowly circumscribed in order to be executed with zeal and success. That task which is the most strictly defined is best performed. It is therefore very desirable, not only that every asso-

sociation, but that every member of it, should have a limited and distinct department; so that, in a town for instance, the object should be the improvement of a single district, or even a single street; and that the exertions of each individual should in like manner be defined, and restrained within certain bounds. Such a mode of proceeding would be exactly suited to the vocation of woman.

Our hope is that, in the end, nothing will be overlooked by the active benevolence of women; but that they will take into their consideration the unhappy of every condition. Innumerable associations for charitable purposes are every where formed, and every possible method of doing good seems called into action by their kind feelings. It is not often that they have large funds at their disposal, but they make every thing useful. The elegant works of their industry, the various results of their talents, all are put in requisition; and the object of all their undertakings is the diffusion of true piety.

In thus proposing the exercise of charity as a desirable resource for women who have passed the age of youth, we have purposely avoided speaking of the advantages it offers to themselves: it seemed to us that they would enter more thoroughly into the true spirit of this heavenly vocation, if it were divested of

any idea of self-interest. If adopted either as a mode of getting quit of their time, or from motives of vanity, or even with the hope of inspiring feelings of gratitude, they will be sure to meet with painful disappointments. Unless their views be perfectly disinterested, they will not only fail in gaining the affection of the poor, but will destroy their own peace of mind. Whilst engaged in the arduous task of doing good we often meet with so much ingratitude, and are often conscious of so many errors in ourselves, that only a pure and humble spirit, which leads us to hope nothing from man,—to consider ourselves as having no merit in the sight of God, to seek the good of our neighbour without a thought of self-interest;—only such a spirit, in short, as ought to animate a truly Christian woman can support us in the task.

Considered in this light, charity acquires a powerful authority over us. As the ordinance of God, it is a law,—a duty; but as it relates to ourselves, it is a feeling,—a passion,—a bright, and yet tranquil glow, which excites without agitating the heart,—which borrows from our natural inclinations their vivacity, their watchfulness, their anxiety, whilst it preserves its own heavenly purity and peace.

CHAPTER IV.

ON LITERARY PURSUITS AS AN OCCUPATION FOR
WOMEN.

No occupations seem so natural to women, so well suited to their feelings and their mental faculties, as those of which we have been speaking. If their time be fully employed in the cares of a family, and in the relief of the unhappy, nothing more can be desired for them. There can never be the same satisfaction in endeavouring to trace out a road for ourselves, as in following the path marked out for us by God himself. The woman who has been enabled to devote herself entirely to the fulfilment of a sacred duty feels no listlessness, no uncertainty. Hence a life of devotedness to others, even though accompanied with many privations and disappointments, appears to us the happiest this world affords.

Such a life, however, does not fall to the lot of all women. How many are there before whom every path seems closed,—who feel themselves useless in their own family, doubting whether their devotedness is acceptable! How many are there who, even in situations where

they might be supposed to enjoy freedom of action, are yet kept in thralldom ! The weakest bonds, though perhaps imposed by friends or relations who have themselves no need of their services, are capable of restraining them in the exercise of charity. It is not in the disposition of women to brave the opposition of opinion ; and when destitute of any natural guide, they are deterred by the merest trifle. Their attempts to do good are thwarted in every possible way : that personal intercourse with the poor, by which alone their hearts can be touched, is rendered difficult to them, or is attended, they are told, with inconvenience ; their joining in any association with other women is blamed or ridiculed. All that is left for them is to perform an occasional act of charity, or to bestow a donation on some charitable institution. But can any salutary impulse be thus given to their existence ?

We may remark, too, that whilst unmarried women, or married women who have no families, are seldom allowed freedom of action, they are, at least in the higher classes, left at full liberty to do nothing ; their indolence is never opposed by opinion. And it is only when they complain of ennui, that the existence of a spirit of mental activity which craves employment begins to be suspected.

They are then told that they have been

carefully educated; that they possess talents which they should cultivate; that they must improve their minds, increase their knowledge; that all the treasures of science and literature are open to them.

Let us inquire how far these various resources can be made available, after the season of youth has passed away. Let us, however, remember at the same time that the question is not as to the temporary employment of the present moment, but that we are seeking for the means of imparting an interest to what may be a long period of life. In order that a woman may not feel time hang heavily on her hands, and that she may not follow an uncertain path in this world, she must have a determined object. She will then form regular habits; she will never feel that hesitation as to the employment of her time which inevitably leads to idleness; she will escape that feeling of listlessness, so frequently the source of sin, if not in itself a sin, and which is both the cause and the proof of moral deterioration.

It is very seldom that the cultivation of the fine arts would answer the end we have in view. It is only under very peculiar circumstances that they can be any thing more than a recreation in the daily life of a woman of mature age. We are far from wishing to cast any reproach on recreations. They are indeed

necessary to our weak nature ; necessary in order to restore the equilibrium of the soul, and to preserve the elasticity and serenity of the mind. Considered in this light these arts are extremely valuable, and the neglect of them is much to be regretted. But considered as an important occupation, unless in the case of such superior talents as cannot fail to assume their due rank, they are seldom destined to outlive youth.

Experience has indeed already decided this point. Commonplace talents are soon exhausted ; the advantage derived from their exercise is soon outweighed by the increasing difficulties in their execution. The voice loses its clearness, and it is not always easy to procure good musical instruments. In drawing the necessary apparatus is often troublesome ; and it frequently happens that when a drawing is finished we are at a loss what to do with it, and that some more common and useful production would have given more pleasure. In short, unless a woman has valued the art for its own sake, and not merely as the means of exciting admiration, she may perhaps still have recourse to it as an occasional amusement, but not as a continual interest in life.

But intellectual studies have a much higher value ; they bring into exercise faculties susceptible of a much greater developement, and

capable of every species of improvement. They give a salutary direction to our thoughts, and afford subjects for meditation during our manual occupations. In such a wide field, however, it is essential to choose some one subject, and keep to it. But this choice must necessarily depend so much on circumstances, and on the nature of individual minds, that it would be impossible to lay down any rules for its direction. At the same time we do recommend one thing,—that it should always be a real study, one which requires application, and affords materials for mental labour. It might, perhaps, seem more agreeable to skim the cream of every subject, without giving ourselves any further trouble; but this would entirely defeat our object. A feeling of want of occupation and a vacuity of mind would soon be revived: the law which enforces on us the necessity of working cannot be transgressed without moral disorganization; and hence arises that restlessness, that meddling disposition, in short, all those faults of which women are so often accused. A task must be prescribed, and the will interested in its performance; then life is well regulated, and recreations are properly enjoyed. When the mind has been really exercised, we recover a sort of moral energy, which shows itself in every thing we undertake. But even then we must confine

ourselves within certain limits; we must propose to ourselves some definite object, and perhaps nothing would answer our purpose so well as one which partook in some degree of the nature of an investigation.

The spirit of research — the simple wish to acquire a complete knowledge of a certain subject, is easily excited; and hence it is that we soon become interested in an employment which might in the first instance be arbitrarily chosen, and it becomes at last almost a necessary part of our existence.

The study of religious history and literature would of itself afford an object well worthy the attention of every truly Christian woman. Could any thing be more natural than for her to devote her leisure time to the consideration of those subjects which are in a more solemn manner presented to her during the hours of devotion? It cannot be denied that the spirit of the age, as well as their own particular inclinations, would be more likely to attract women towards other subjects; their interest will be more excited by various questions relating to politics and political economy; but it is on this very account that we are anxious to propose for them an entirely different line of study.

A woman may indeed be so situated as to participate not only with pleasure, but with

apparent success, in the impulse which leads man to take pleasure in business. But, generally speaking, it is far better for them to dismiss from their minds every thing which would be likely to excite their imagination, and to avoid any participation in the heated discussions of men. This is more especially the case at the age which we are now considering. Few women perhaps attain to it without having had their feelings or their self-esteem more or less wounded; and what a blessing it must then be to retreat from all such regrets and recollections, and to have a resource which will afford to their still active minds objects calculated at once to calm and to exercise them! Such a resource we would have them taught by their previous education to find in the study of the phenomena of nature. One powerful interest, hitherto little known to women, would be excited by this occupation—a hope of contributing in some slight degree to the advancement of science. In moral studies, any approaches to truth, or any ingenious views which might strike them, would be easily lost sight of in the general vagueness of the subject; but, in the natural sciences, every observation of a new fact is a discovery, however trifling, and forms an additional link to remain for ever fixed in the great chain. Nor is any very profound learning necessary to enable them to

aspire to such success. Any well-informed man, would he take the trouble, might easily explain to women how they might, with a little study, follow out a variety of useful investigations. But in order to do this with energy, they must be animated by no other desire than that of discovering the truth. And why should they not feel this desire, and, instead of passing so much time either in idleness, or in equally idle occupation, follow some of these quiet and useful employments?

Mere selfish pleasure would then no longer be the object of their actions;—their views would be disinterested. The difference between an occupation undertaken solely for our own gratification, and one which derives its interest from its tendency to benefit others, can hardly be conceived. Give, then, to woman this higher motive; propose to her to assist in some one of those great undertakings to which men of superior talents have so frequently devoted themselves; and even if her efforts should produce no external result, they will have ennobled and animated her existence; and though in the present state of things women certainly would not be capable of organizing any great system of study, yet as we hear constant complaints from scientific men of the want of more observations with regard to a great variety of facts, would it not be possible for them

to have recourse to the active, assiduous, and willing assistants they might have in intelligent women?

I leave it to more competent judges to point out both desirable objects and the best road to them, and to explain in what manner women could be employed as labourers in the extensive field of science. It is a subject which would afford materials for a most useful work.

In all these researches, however, it must be acknowledged that women would only imperfectly supply the place of men; but there are others for which they appear particularly well suited. For instance, the observation of the external signs by which the moral feelings are manifested,—an investigation connected both with natural science by its examination of facts, and with psychology by its study of the mind,—seems peculiarly adapted to the nature of their faculties.

We have frequently alluded to the quickness with which women penetrate into the emotions of the heart. Indications too slight to be described are sufficient to enlighten them on this subject; but at the same time by a little attention they are themselves made aware of the secret of their art of divination. One great source whence their knowledge is derived has been the study of their own children; for in these little creatures, so easily excited, and so

little on their guard to conceal their emotions, we see, as it were in relief, those outward signs of the internal feelings which are afterwards recognized, though much less distinctly marked, in adults. These observations, curious in themselves, might often present us with moral results which would not be entirely useless.

But women must be warned, that unless their observations are conducted with the greatest accuracy, they will be not only useless, but injurious to science; unless they can utterly and sincerely give up every idea of producing effect, all the pleasure of being known and praised, and very often even of knowing whether any direct result has arisen from their labours, they will never succeed in exciting confidence, and men of deep research will not long continue to employ them. This freedom from any thing like vanity will at the same time preserve them from the reproaches of the frivolous. No one can have any right to find fault with a woman for such a noble employment of her time, as long as she herself makes no parade of it, and retains all her simplicity of character.

The advice which we have given, that women should from childhood be accustomed to write an account of their various studies, will be of use to them all their life. By thus securing a record of their reminiscences, they are obliged

to form clear ideas, and, if we may so express it, to *listen* to what they read. Every work of any importance should in the first instance be read straight through, in order to comprehend its general spirit and tendency; then an account of its principal divisions may be noted down, and a few extracts made from its more remarkable passages. And by afterwards reflecting on the opinions and thoughts which its perusal has excited, we give our understanding an active part to perform, without which no study can be pursued with any interest.

It may be objected, that by thus encouraging women to write we are teaching them to become authors. This is far from being our intention. Generally speaking, we quite agree in the common opinion that celebrity does but ill accord with the destination of women. But without entering at large on this discussion, we would say that the unobtrusive employment which we have recommended is only furnishing them with an additional self-resource; and even when a woman believes herself gifted with some particular talent, we would advise her not to listen too easily to its appeal. Her understanding will be matured by the years devoted to solitary studies; she will thus be better enabled to judge how far her vocation for writing is real, and her writings themselves, though less numerous, will be more varied, and better both in matter and style.

But most especially would we warn young women against the temptation of rushing blindly on the career of authorship as writers of romance. Here they cannot have any right to claim attention on account of previous labours, or motives of utility. They seem openly to declare their conviction of their own talents, and to invite others to judge of them. All the disadvantages of publicity are in this case multiplied. Not only are your thoughts, your mind, your style, offered to public criticism, but the inward feelings of your heart are all laid open to public view. You disclose to the whole world those emotions which should never be revealed but to one individual.

No doubt there is a great degree of fascination in this species of composition, and any other occupation will appear flat and uninteresting in comparison. It excites the imagination much in the same way as love itself does; it produces the same indifference to the daily occurrences of life, the same insensibility to those distresses which are not in any way connected with exaltation of feeling; it is, in short, a species of moral intoxication.

But, it may be asked, is not this ardent inspiration in itself a proof of genius? It may be so; but the possession of genius only imposes an additional degree of responsibility. Besides, we may admire the work, and yet pass a severe

judgment on the author. A woman is primarily to be regarded as a moral being, — a being who obeys or disobeys the dictates of conscience. If her genius, once called into action, impels her with an irresistible force, and in spite of her better judgment, to give the greatest possible effect to scenes of passionate feeling, why should she describe such scenes at all? Why choose that kind of composition which is most injurious to women? Is it not too probable that by presenting to their imagination such fascinating pictures of high-wrought feelings, she will excite in them such a desire to experience these emotions as may often expose them to much consequent unhappiness?

Yet we must not mistake the spirit of the present age. The intellectual paths are now so completely accessible to women, that there must always be some who feel themselves called on to become authors. But what an extensive field is opened to them in that necessity for religious and intellectual developement which is every where felt! And if they have not received a determined bias from some predominant inclination or talent, all those faculties, the cultivation of which we have recommended, may be fully employed in the education of poor children. Most of the books of instruction too which are intended for the common people are, in our opinion, far from answering the purpose; deficient

alike in method and reasoning; or so dry as to repel rather than attract, they are wanting in that interest which women, if their knowledge were more accurate, could easily impart. They have been endowed by Providence with faculties which enable them to find striking examples, to make such use of the imagination as would interest these simple minds, to touch with delicacy chords which vibrate to the heart, and to point out the hand of God both in the works of nature and in the human soul. Oh let those who are unfettered by other and more imperative bonds, devote these precious gifts to the amelioration of their unfortunate brethren,—to that class of day-labourers who seem at the present time in a more suffering and disorganized state than ever! Let the higher-gifted strive to enlighten with the twofold illumination of an instructed reason for this world, and an actuating faith for the world to come, such of their unhappy fellow-creatures as have been led astray by false glimmerings of light, and have lost their hopes of heaven without receiving any thing on earth in exchange.

CHAPTER V.

COMMENCEMENT OF OLD AGE.

DURING the long period which intervenes between youth and old age, time often advances with an almost inaudible step. If health and vigour have been preserved, it is only by the gradual decay of her personal charms that woman is warned of the progress of years. But after sixty, she can no longer remain blind to the many changes both in herself and in her situation. Nothing around her has remained stationary ; human affairs have presented a variety of aspects, and every different scene which she has witnessed has produced a distinct effect on her mind. Impressions which, though apparently resulting from natural causes, may perhaps have been providentially ordained, have successively produced great modifications in her internal existence. In order to guide herself with safety in the path which still lies before her, she must consider seriously both what she has been, and what she now is.

If she turn her thoughts to this world, what has been passing before her eyes ? One entire generation has vanished. She has seen the

venerable trees of the forest, under whose shade her youthful days had glided on, fall one after another; and is now herself exposed to the same fate. In addition to the bitter regret which has been excited by severe and irreparable losses, she feels a sort of terror at being so closely confronted by death. How painfully does she miss those protecting friends, those supports of her childhood, those partial spectators of the joys of her youth, who were accustomed to see in her, charms of which no one now discerns a vestige! Some had perhaps been the object of a reverence almost amounting to devotion, and had afforded an example of whatever is most touching in the human character—patience under increasing infirmities, resignation at the approach of death, and the foretaste of a happier life.

And when she turns to her contemporaries, what is offered to her view? Part have already been cut off; others are struggling against an accumulation of ills. Some precious friends may indeed yet remain; but how much is her intercourse changed, even with the friends of her youth! All have their secret griefs, with all there is a degree of management necessary, a prudent reserve to be practised. That spirit of frankness, that desire of open communication which springs from the hope of intelligent sympathy, is gone. The picture of past scenes of

pleasure is saddened by the mourning figures which now appear in it; and even the pleasures of memory seem to have faded away.

Such is the idea of old age, as it often presents itself to the woman who stands on its threshold. She has indeed long since discovered that mothers have the happiest lot in this life, and that their happiness is principally derived from their children. Yet how often do we see that the affection which exists with such strength, in a mother's breast is oppressed with a secret melancholy! The part she has hitherto had to play was important; but as she advances towards old age, her advice is less frequently asked: on some points she is considered unenlightened; and it is often thought desirable to spare her the anxiety which might attend the discussion of plans for the future. After having long been the centre of every interest, she is now become the object only of cares and attentions. Her feelings remain the same, but she shrinks from displaying them. Great discretion is now become necessary: she finds that grown-up children are only friends, — friends, it may be, who are dearer and more devoted than any others, but whose privileges must be respected. There has been an exchange of parts; it is the mother now who is dependent on her children: they still retain their affection for her, but they no longer need her assistance. They can go on

without her, and so it ought to be ; but to her they are still every thing ; she cannot go on without them.

There are, indeed, grandchildren, cherished and beloved, the delight of old age, granted to us by Heaven to cheer our latter days ; but we enjoy without possessing them. They are not our property ; and the maternal affection we feel for them is divested of the energy attendant on responsibility. No doubt it is a great blessing to have such objects of love ; and though exercising no authority, and often regretting perhaps our inability to be of much use to them, yet a cordial regard is frequently established between them and us, and the two generations become as one in our hearts.

We see then that a woman, as she approaches old age, soon perceives that the various interests which bound her to this world, though weakened perhaps by the effect of time, may still cause her distress, unless she take much higher views of life. But every difficulty is solved by the conviction that we must die, — die to this world, and live in eternity. And how curiously interwoven are life and death, — each beginning and advancing insensibly ! We have already seen them concurrent in infancy. At twenty we no longer relish the enjoyments of childhood, nor at forty those of youth. New feelings and fresh hopes are continually springing up within

us. Two principles — one of dissolution, the other of revival — are constantly displaying themselves; but whilst death triumphs over the body, life gains possession of the soul.

The divine work in which we are required to assist, is that of liberating the immortal soul from the bonds by which it is fettered here below. Such an undertaking cannot be accomplished without many painful struggles; but the more we free ourselves from a multiplicity of interests, the more easily shall we elevate ourselves towards heaven.

And when we consider what inclinations first die away within us from want of sustenance, we cannot but acknowledge the wise and benevolent purpose of God herein manifested. Our vanity, our ambition, are sacrificed; but our capacity for loving, which is destined to increase in a future life, becomes enlarged, and purified from every selfish feeling.

What is it, then, that we principally regret in those interests which appear to us so changed? Generally speaking, our authority, which had previously been in full force. Our love of governing can be no longer indulged. Even our own confidence in our judgment is often shaken; so forcibly do we feel that we are left out of the current of affairs. We must have the clearest reason on our side if we would be listened to; and as we can no longer hope for

influence from personal qualities, we must seek for it through our disposition. Nothing but kindness, good humour, a constant consideration for others, can supply the place of those charms which are passed away even from the memory. The best plan we can pursue is to rest all our interests on a new foundation, on a system of continual self-improvement.

And this is acknowledged by any woman advanced in years who knows how to form a just estimate of her situation. A retrospect of her past life enables her to trace the gradually increasing indifference of her soul to all earthly things. Whilst admitting the effect of the ordinary course of life, she marks the much more decisive results of unexpected events. In the first place, grief—even that bitter grief which seems to break the very thread of our existence, now appears to her intended by God as the means of showing us the vanity of all earthly objects. No worldly possessions can minister comfort to a sorrowing heart; it feels no wish but to find an end to its troubles. Thus it is that every fresh sorrow detaches us more and more from this world; but there is one, the most trying of all, which brings us back to God.

When mourning over the loss of a beloved friend, nothing but the hope of being hereafter reunited could afford us any consolation. By

this feeling all our wishes are directed to heaven, and to that Christian religion which has opened to us an entrance thither. And here let us acknowledge the Divine goodness. Our supplications, however interested in their nature, are listened to, — our prayers are accepted, and a happy change begins to take place in the soul.

It is not, indeed, often the case that grief produces such good fruits in youth. The delusive charms of that age are too powerful. A sort of beauty and harmony seems associated with the deepest sorrow. It passes through the soul like a majestic tragedy; and the very emotion which disturbs our whole existence prevents our having any very distinct idea of our distress. Shall I go farther, and say that the touching idea of her own tears, of her mourning attire, follows a young woman into her solitude, — that she is carried away by the eloquence of her own grief, — and that a sort of tender pity for herself softens her mind, and relieves itself in a torrent of tears? And when this illusion vanishes, she begins already to look forward to the future.

It is when affliction comes upon a woman in the midst of her career, that it is most keenly felt. Then many earthly hopes have faded away. Life is in its full vigour, and impressions have lost something of that tenderness by which their excess has hitherto been moderated. We are less easily moved to tears; our feelings are

not so excitable; we are no longer enveloped in flattering delusions, and no new prospect is opened to us. But the time of our greatest suffering is also the crisis of our safety. A profound grief tears away the last veil which concealed the truth from us, and displays to us in their true colours the world, our own character, and our conduct. By an instinctive feeling we are led to sound the very depths of our heart; and this severe investigation brings to our memory every action and every word which a more deeply-rooted piety would have forbidden. The past rises up to accuse us; and can any human being plead not guilty to this accusation, or one person be found whose heart is at any time perfectly pure? Once condemned by this internal judge, we better understand why a merciful God should have appointed suffering as the means of effecting such an important change in our souls.

And how astonishing it is that when we have acknowledged ourselves to be guilty, when the consciousness of our moral misery has added fresh tears to those shed by grief, our suffering is mitigated,—we begin to breathe more freely! It may, however, be argued that nothing tends so much to support us in trouble as a feeling of innocence; and no doubt, as regards human beings, it may be true that we can best brave their anger when their accusations are unjust.

But in our relation to God this is impossible. He cannot accuse us unjustly. No one is without sin in his sight. To reject this belief would only aggravate our misery. Unless we acknowledge God to be just, how can we believe Him to be good? And even in afflicting us, He acts both justly and kindly: our temporary grievance has a merciful object. Without this salutary warning, should we have entered on the only safe road, — should we have occupied ourselves seriously in the examination of the past, — should we have been led to repent, to have recourse to our Saviour, and to seek for sanctification? And affliction, when it has produced such fruits, becomes itself mitigated. That peace which “*passeth all understanding*” enters into the heart; and that divine promise of Christ is fulfilled, “*Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*”

In what we have just said we have made use of mental suffering as our example; but a similar effect is often produced by other trials; — long-continued bodily sufferings, a dangerous illness, or the approach of old age, bring us back to truth, and to God. And when this happy change has taken place, every event tends to increase its consequences. The soul, which holds communion with God by prayer, is supported and revived by assistance

from Him ; — assistance, perhaps, more particularly granted in old age, when it is so much needed. Yet we must never forget that even at this age this divine succour may be neglected or refused, and that there is often in the heart a natural tendency towards corruption rather than towards sanctification. Hence it may happen that we do not reflect on our past life, and its effect on a future life, and that we do not pray, or do not pray aright. We may carry on with us to the end of our earthly existence a train of illusions, which one by one will vanish away ; and when they have all left us, we may be satisfied with pretending that we still possess them, and assume the appearance of pleasure as an excuse for our continued presence in the circles of gaiety. We may, with our innate penetration, trace in the eyes of those around us our own decay ; and our self-love, surviving as it does every thing else, may receive innumerable wounds. All this may go on without our deriving any lesson from it. But what will be the consequence ? The soul will become deteriorated, the heart withered ; old age — the very idea of which we endeavour to banish from our minds — will strike even at our intellectual faculties ; and whilst all that is mortal in us must be “ *swallowed up by life,*” what is living will be attacked, or at least threatened by death.

CHAPTER VI.

OLD AGE CONTINUED.—OBSERVATIONS AND ADVICE.

WHEN we arrive at the conclusion of a story in the perusal of which we have been deeply interested, we feel that all the descriptions and scenes which have for the time engrossed our attention will soon fade away from our imagination,—that the whole phantasmagoria will quickly vanish before the realities of life. Such, in many respects, is our condition in old age. No one can doubt that in the broad light of eternal day the deceptive visions of our vanity will all be dispersed. Yet, in the arrangement of our earthly existence, there is a pervading principle of truth which must not be overlooked; this transitory arrangement is, no doubt, connected with the invisible things of eternity. The soul will never die; its noble and holy affections must be fully developed; and the unravelling of the plot which will take place in the last pages of our history must be often of a fearful nature, and always of the highest importance.

We cannot, therefore, be expected to stifle

all our feelings in old age; as long as we breathe we must live, and live as in the sight of God: we must be always at his disposal, to act, or not, as He judges best. But there is one kind of activity always possible: we may always exercise considerable influence over ourselves, and some little on those around us. The path which leads to heaven has been marked out on earth; it has been traced by the Divine hand, and we must pursue it to the end.

Hence it follows that the latter years of life are far indeed from being devoid of interest. Each moment is of inestimable value. How often does the Gospel teach us that previous indifference has been effaced by a spirit of faith and love, and hope been revived in a withered heart! The prolongation of our life may, then, be a subject of great thankfulness; and the soul, resigned to the eternal dispensations, persuaded that these dispensations are all intended for good, becomes reconciled to old age, — views it with an impartial eye, and before long acknowledges that, even in a worldly point of view, this last season of life has its share of the Divine blessings.

At the same time, we cannot treat with contempt those fears which are so often felt at the idea of old age, and its inevitable termination — death; fears which have been ex-

perienced even by men who, under different circumstances, have faced death with the greatest intrepidity. From such fears the only certain refuge must be sought in religion; but the simple observation of facts may also suggest to those who experience them some consolatory reflections.

One great source of these fears, no doubt, consists in the dread of increasing infirmities. We are at first easily alarmed, and on the occurrence of the slightest ailment are apt to imagine that our decline will now be uninterrupted. But this is far from being the case; this temporary gloom is succeeded by brighter days; — pleasures, which we considered as lost for ever, are recovered; and if after descending ten steps we re-ascend nine, we flatter ourselves that we have regained our original height. Making allowance (as we must do at every period of life) for the chance of dying, no suffering is more keen at this age than at any other. Common maladies are, perhaps, less violent; and since every age is alike open to death or to recovery, since the only difference in this respect is in the degree of probability, we cannot derive any exclusive characteristic of old age from physical ills.

The only certain loss which we have to bear as we advance in life, is that of a portion of our bodily strength; and, as our wishes are

soon moderated by the idea of the trouble attending their accomplishment, this comparative weakness is not unfrequently a tolerably happy state. We find this particularly the case with those women who take a calm view of their situation. Their employments, little fatiguing in themselves, are such as may be continued to an advanced age; many of those interests by which they have hitherto been occupied still exist, and, by affording a degree of exercise to their minds, preserve them in a state of youthful vigour. Men, on the other hand, after long resisting the effects of age, are often obliged to give up at once all active exertion. Nothing can immediately be substituted for the important interests which have heretofore engrossed them; and, unless they can learn to employ themselves in sedentary occupations, it too often happens that the idleness into which they have so suddenly been thrown is followed by as sudden a decay of all their faculties.

Generally speaking, the most painful transition for women is that from youth to maturity; for men, that from maturity to old age. Yet if the moral condition of men have remained uninjured, they have still a flattering part to act. There is something poetical, noble, and venerable in the idea of an old man; every one *rises up before the hoary head*. Old age

in woman has less of dignity. When prevented by it from pleasing, and thus fulfilling that obligation which has been almost despotically imposed on her sex, she imagines herself the object of an unfavourable prejudice, and it requires some elevation of character to enable her to rise above this feeling. Hence her best plan is to attract attention only by such qualities as ought never to be lost, — dignity, modesty, delicacy; to think of herself, and to lead others to think of her, only as an immortal being. Even the remnant of life, when thus associated with eternity, will ever command respect.

To feel that we belong to God, and to wait his pleasure, — whether it be to call us to Himself immediately, or to prolong our pilgrimage on earth; — this is the most important duty of old age. If He still suffer us to remain here, it is most likely because He has still some work left for us to do. He has, no doubt, allotted us some employment, which our conscience, if closely questioned, will point out to us. In order to accomplish the task He has set us in the best possible manner, we must be careful to preserve our instruments of action; that is to say, our faculties. But as we know that they must inevitably become weaker, it may not be entirely useless to examine in what manner they are affected by age.

It is universally acknowledged that the memory is the faculty first attacked, and which therefore gives us the first warning of the decay about to take place. Its irregularities and uncertainties continually increase; and it appears especially to lose its power in that class of words where it receives no aid from any of the other faculties; as, for instance, in the case of proper names and dates. Facts, being generally accompanied by images, are more easily retained in our mind: hence it is that the *mnemonic art* (as it is called) has been founded on the assistance which the memory derives from the senses of sight and hearing. It is no doubt desirable to have a variety of resources within our reach; but nothing, after all, tends so effectually to preserve this faculty as its constant exercise; and there have been instances of men in advanced life who, by accustoming themselves to pass under review their various mental acquisitions, to use their best endeavours to recal with accuracy the events of their past life, and even to set themselves the task of learning some things by heart, have been eminently successful in this respect.

The memory does not appear to have any direct hold on the feelings; when once extinct, it has no power to revive them. We can recollect a variety of actions to which we were excited by particular inclinations; but unless

some remains of these inclinations still exist, we are unable to recal the state of the mind when it was influenced by them: hence it is that the old so often misunderstand the young, and are unable to sympathize in their feelings. They sympathize more readily with the feelings of childhood, because the petty faults of this age — greediness, impatience, timidity, aversion to restraint — still exist in their breasts. Our selfish instincts are, alas, imperishable!

Surely we may draw some instruction from this circumstance. In the first place, we cannot fail to perceive how important it is carefully to cherish kindly affections. Should we cease to be occupied with the happiness of others, should we seek to find in their failings an excuse for our own selfishness, we shall by degrees fall into a state of apathy, — a sort of partial extinction, more to be dreaded than death itself. The latter reunites us to God: the other separates us from him. By thus drying up every source of consolation, old age is delivered up to its worst tormentor, — an engrossing attention to mere personal feelings, and these having only death to dwell on.

We must also understand how important it is to cultivate in our children such sentiments of piety as may grow with their growing years. In their old age they will recal with pleasure those little deeds of charity which were per-

formed in the sight of God: the recollection of those actions which have been the effect of religious feelings always tends to revive these feelings in the heart. But this is not the case with the turbulent passions of youth; they cannot last; nor are they likely to be revived by the painful remembrance of the errors they have caused. Hence what an important lesson, especially for woman, may be drawn! The slightest faults into which they may formerly have been led by their culpable affections will be recalled by their pitiless memory, and stript of all the vain colourings with which they were formerly veiled.

With regard to mental qualities, we may, I think, learn from the observation of old age that those faculties which are naturally the most powerful in an individual survive the longest. It is not always our vivacity, our gaiety, or our imagination, which first disappear. On the contrary, we may observe that in some old people their originality becomes more striking when no longer balanced by their other qualities. Generally speaking, however, the reasoning faculty preponderates, and as the propensities become weaker obtains greater freedom for its exercise.

But we must not forget that the power of reasoning may remain, even when reason, in its highest faculty, no longer retains its su-

premacy. What else is the power of drawing just conclusions from a principle in itself erroneous, and the habit of referring every thing, from motives of selfishness, to our own physical interest? Hence it is that we see so many peevish, tyrannical old men, embittering alike their own existence and that of all around them.

From such painful contemplations, what a relief it is to turn our thoughts to the kind and excellent amongst the aged, whose temper and character have been softened in their passage through life. It is difficult to imagine an object of greater veneration — I had almost said envy — than a truly religious old man. What serenity sits on his open brow! Immortality seems depicted on his countenance. The feeling that his soul will never die is ever present with him; — without seeking to distress his children by the idea of an approaching separation, he continually proves that he considers his departure as only the commencement of a temporary absence. He stands, as it were, between this world and eternity.

In this, as in other respects, it must be acknowledged that men arrive at a degree of elevation in old age which women seldom attain. But women are, perhaps, less liable to any great decay of their faculties; less liable to be attacked by those two great evils of old

age, — the withering of the affections, and the increased dominance of the physical instincts. From their necessarily dependent condition they have always been occupied with others, and their hearts do not easily become chilled. Having been constantly accustomed to submit to trifling evils, they bear greater misfortunes with patience; and having been early taught to subdue any unworthy inclinations, they are seldom afterwards led astray by them. By the general purity of their lives, and by their freedom from the anxieties of business, and consequently from any intercourse with the more depraved portion of their fellow-creatures, they are preserved from that contempt for the human race which sometimes hardens the best hearts and paralyzes all their good endeavours. Preserving even to the close of life many of their youthful interests, they still enjoy many pleasures for which men have generally lost all relish.

But if, thanks to a more flexible organization, their lot in old age is often happier than that of men, should they not view with compassion the fate of those who were so long their superiors? Should they not devote all their remaining powers to those amongst them with whom they are more closely connected? Henceforward it should be their vocation to relieve those evils to which men have not been ac-

customed; to soften that pride which revolts at the idea of dependence; and to prevent by their affection that withering of the heart which might otherwise ensue. But let us do them justice; — they *do* perform these duties; perform them with a zeal and devotedness which no coolness can abate, — with a delicacy and tenderness which, whilst apparently engaged only in soothing the evils inseparable from old age, actually reanimate the drooping soul.

Again, the *moral* influence exercised by women may frequently be very great in old age. That freedom from selfishness which exists in a truly benevolent mind enables them to form a correct estimate of every thing; it blunts the edge of self-love, and prevents even the sufferings of the heart from being too keenly felt; — either because the idea of approaching death has a tranquillizing effect, or because the weakness of old age, not allowing the mind to dwell long together on the same object, prevents any sorrow from obtaining a permanent hold on it. In like manner our anxiety about future troubles is much diminished. One ever present idea — not, perhaps, entirely free from selfishness — the idea that we shall not be here, has generally a tranquillizing effect; and thus it is that our feelings lose that bitterness which made them alike distressing to ourselves and annoying to others.

Hence it happens that a woman who retains her agreeableness acquires, as she becomes old, greater freedom of mind, and more power of speaking the truth without offending. From the elevated station she now occupies, seeing only the good she is able to effect, she can speak with simplicity and calmness, and her expressions are moderated by an interest entirely unalloyed with any personal feeling. She is filled with pity on beholding her young friends still under the dominion of those illusions which must be dispelled by time. How happy would she feel could she, by leading their thoughts to eternal truth, avert that painful awakening from these illusions which the world is preparing for them !

It is, however, in a religious point of view that the calmness and experience of women in advanced life enable them to be most useful. The knowledge they have acquired of the uncertainty of every thing in this world, and their firm conviction that God alone never deceives, render them ardently desirous of inspiring others with that faith by which they are themselves sustained. All their wishes, both for themselves and for those whom they love, are directed to eternity.

Under every circumstance, it appears to us that the spirit by which the conduct of a woman advanced in life ought to be influenced

requires, in an especial manner, the existence of two qualities on the importance of which we have already remarked,—dignity and humility. Dignity becomes her as an immortal being, already by anticipation inhabiting her future abode; humility, as a feeble woman, now more dependent than ever,—feeling herself unworthy of what she yet ventures to hope, expecting that hope to be realized only through a merit not her own. Nothing but a truly Christian spirit can inspire her with qualities apparently so opposed to each other.

CHAPTER VII.

LAST PERIOD OF OLD AGE.

IN proportion as we approach nearer to the extreme term of human life, we become less closely connected with the external world. Even in the bosom of a family by whom she is loved and honoured, the aged mother feels the necessity of withdrawing herself more and more from all earthly concerns. Her activity is no longer required; every situation is filled. Two generations have arisen after her;—the youngest, anxious to be employed, full of energy, seizes on every office in which it can be trusted; the other, already matured by experience, acquainted with present opinions and customs, is now fully capable of serving as a guide. One executes, the other directs. All that a woman can do in the decline of life is to take a kindly interest in what is going on around her; to be a benevolent spectator, and nothing more.

In fact, it is no longer desirable that she should exert a more active influence; too much responsibility would attach to the measures she might recommend. She has the privilege and

the power, especially as a mother, of lifting up her voice against any thing morally wrong; but as regards mere conventional forms, it is better for her to remain silent. She is always liable to be either too severe with respect to interests in which she can no longer sympathize, or too indulgent when her object is merely to please. Besides, is it not likely that the opposition which her advice must often encounter will produce vexation, or will revive in her breast that self-love which is never entirely extinguished? We cannot stir up the dying embers without rekindling some, however faint.

Religious duties always survive, and must be fulfilled; and, in addition to these, that exact order which, at every age, a woman should seek to maintain in all her concerns; a little needlework; and the care so to preserve her faculties that she may be able, if not to assist others, at least not to become a burthen on them;—these are all that are necessary to occupy her time, and secure her independence. Let her especially guard against that restless activity, that desire of meddling in every thing, which casts a shade of suspicion over the best intentions, and seems to betray a wish of acting a principal part even to the close of life. Nothing tends more than this to deprive us of the respect of others, and nothing has a more injurious effect on our own characters.

Tranquillity ought to be the distinguishing characteristic of old age ; a tranquillity resulting from progressive self-annihilation, and internal amelioration. Where this tranquillity exists, it is in itself useful ; useful both as an example, and in its immediate influence. The opinions which are expressed are then allowed their full weight, and good feelings are widely diffused. When perfect harmony has long subsisted between the mother of a family and her children, her latter days will be full of comfort. Knowing that the intentions of all around her are good—their conduct wise and judicious, she enjoys the gratification of observing the machinery which she has set in motion working alone, and no longer requiring her guiding hand. At times she almost imagines that her soul has already passed the confines of earth, and surveys every thing from a heavenly station.

But, in order to attain this tranquillity, a perfect submission to the accompaniments of old age is necessary. She who is truly resigned to the will of God is equally so to the various effects of advancing years, though without any wish to anticipate them. Hence she bears with patience the burthen of physical dependence, and the necessity of receiving every thing from those she loves, without being able to make any return ; and is even reconciled to

the idea of being now treated with a consideration arising as much from duty as affection. And when she has at last brought herself not to wish for that tender regard from her children which must ere long have become a source of sorrow to them, she will have overcome the only remaining weakness in a woman's heart.

Thus, already loosened from earthly bonds, yet never ceasing to love, her tender sympathy with those around her does not prevent her feeling a strong conviction that one object alone remains for her; that the object of her whole life now is to die well;—to die with hope;—so to enjoy by anticipation the happiness of the opposite shore as not to dread the passage thither. It would seem as if our Heavenly Father in depriving old age of active strength had destined it to be a period of contemplation. The aged Christian woman, such as we imagine her, lives in futurity; all her affections here partake of a celestial character; nor would it be right to infer from the privations to which she is subject, that she is destitute of consolation—even of enjoyment. The beloved objects by whom she is surrounded, and those whose departure she has mourned are associated in her thoughts, and all viewed as in the bosom of their God. Her conversation is, as the apostle expresses it, in Heaven. Deriving love from the source of all love, peace

from the source of all peace, she has already begun her heavenly existence.

Yet her earthly existence, even in old age, is not devoid of enjoyment. This is not in general sufficiently acknowledged. There is an inherent charm even in the most desolate condition of life; and this charm is perhaps felt more strongly in old age, because it cannot be attributed to external circumstances. Life itself is such an immense blessing that she who fancies she has little value for it, clings to it involuntarily. However we may wish to set out, and not to delay our departure, some sighs will still escape from the bottom of the heart.

It is on the remembrance of her past life that a woman who is approaching its termination most frequently dwells; and this not so much with a view to recal her sins, as to consider the numerous blessings she has received. Reconciled to God and to herself, she feels that she has obtained pardon through her Saviour. No doubt such a review must frequently bring to mind her past errors; but the idea of them is, as it were, absorbed in a feeling of adoration. Amidst all the vicissitudes of her own life, and indeed of human life in general, she traces a scheme of mercy, a benevolent design, the accomplishment of which is continually frustrated by our own innumerable frailties. The course of life seems to her to have such a tendency,

that all who oppose no resistance to it are insensibly drawn towards God.

But let us for a moment leave out all opposing elements, and although we have already in some degree shown the moral influence of the various periods of life, let us conclude by pointing out the successive aids which have been granted to women.

In the first place almost every woman has received a religious education; every one, as a child, has learned the touching address, *Our Father who art in Heaven*. And how much is expressed in this name of Father! Love; anxiety for our happiness, for our virtue; forgiveness of our transgressions, are all included in it. She who acknowledges this, is already softened, already submissive, already disposed to obey the commands of God.

Henceforward too she has become interested in the word of God. The Holy Scriptures, and especially the life of our Saviour, have excited a multitude of good feelings in her breast. She has received with submission and faith, many truths, the meaning of which is as yet unknown to her; and when, at a later period, she experiences their beneficial influence in ameliorating her heart, her veneration for them had been already secured. No doubt she would not be able for some time to understand the divine spirituality of the gospel; the precepts, how-

ever sincerely they might be revered, were not as yet comprehended in their full extent. Though aware that her great anxiety should be concerning the rectitude of her internal motives, yet her attention is constantly fixed on her actions. Having frequently observed that these are influenced by the will, it seems to her that a will, continually acting, must be sufficient to direct her aright; but she has not yet discovered that the great defect of the will consists in its not continually acting. Some praiseworthy efforts, and a tolerably well regulated external conduct might result from such a state of moral feeling, but accompanied most likely with an overweening self-confidence.

This partial knowledge of Christianity continues during a great part of her life; nor is it essentially changed by the wide developement of ideas and feelings which nature and education produce in the youthful mind. She may have been deeply moved by the touching and sublime beauties of religion; but her bursts of pious feeling, however ardent at the moment, were always liable to inequality. Alternately engrossed by the allurements of the world, and the illusions natural to her age, nothing took her entirely out of herself; and even her noblest feelings were not completely free from selfishness.

At a later period, led by strong affection to devote herself to another, and to bind herself by a sacred obligation, she entered with ardour on the duties of a wife and a mother. Her heart seemed to expand, and to contain an immense space, which God alone will at some future time be able to fill. This was the era of better resolutions; and whilst her active faculties were all unfolded, she prayed with more fervour for the objects of a love such as she had not before experienced.

The more a woman's duties are multiplied, the more unequal has she found herself to her vocation. Constantly liable to the same errors, she must ere long have felt convinced that her heart was not what it should be. This period of her life is marked by vain efforts for the correction of her character, by alternations of hope and despair, by discouragement, struggles, and perhaps a partial victory; and when at last the dispersion of innumerable illusions, added to her deprivations, have made her fully aware of the impossibility of trusting to her own exertions, what is wanting to bring her back entirely to God but a new principle of existence?

And this principle she possesses; at least if she have taken advantage of that second education which is bestowed on us. It would be no easy task to point out all the various means by

which God draws us to Himself; but affliction is one of the most common; in the midst of the complete revolution which it effects, the secret recesses of the heart are discovered, and that self-esteem, that eager desire to be loved, to be preferred to everything else,—in short that selfishness, which assumes by turns the most opposite forms, is laid bare. Then it is that despairing of ourselves, and sorrowing even more for what we have *been*, than for what we have *done*, we give up all idea of a justification which is impossible, and trust our cause entirely to the Saviour.

We must not deceive ourselves; this complete revolution in the heart requires divine assistance; “*No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him.*” * And to come to him is to feel that we were lost, and that he will save us; it is to feel that impression of deliverance, which presupposes a condemnation; but the Saviour himself has declared to us how this impression, which may indeed almost be called miraculous, is to be obtained. “*Seek,*” he says, “*and ye shall find; ask, and it shall be given to you; knock, and it shall be opened to you.*” † In this close union of the

* St. John, vi. 44.

† St. Matthew, vii. 7.

soul which prays, with the God who grants in the name of the Saviour, we behold the work of grace, the hope of salvation.

The Holy Spirit, that comforter which was promised by Jesus Christ, raises and revives the dejected soul, and smooths the path of sanctification. Our motives and desires are changed; truths, hitherto admitted on the credit of the Holy Scriptures, now appear confirmed by our own experience, and are incorporated in the memory. Then it is, that religion, becoming a really actuating principle, purifies and regulates the will. Luther calls the Christian, "*a new man in a new world*;" hence, although the working of the Deity may be modified by the various frailties of our nature, it is no less true that when Christianity has once entered into the heart, it possesses a power of ameliorating it, of which human wisdom has never been capable; and that it is the only religion really adapted to human nature; at least if the object of religion be to regenerate that nature.

She who feels that her soul has received this blessing enjoys true peace of mind; she has had too much experience of the faithfulness of God in her past life, not to trust implicitly in his glorious promises; and she submits with patience to such trials as may yet be appointed

her. Of these trials, one of the greatest is the decay of the senses. When our eyes refuse to perform any longer their accustomed office, we can derive no more enjoyment from the beauties of nature, no more consolation from reading the scriptures, no more comfort in the midst of our sorrows from the sympathizing countenances of those whom we love. This calamity may, however, seem to have been in some degree rendered illustrious; it has had its poets; but who has ever been able to invest the infirmity of deafness—an infirmity which may be termed intellectual, as it puts a stop to the communion of minds, with any thing like glory? It has no outward characteristic; and its state of isolation excites little pity, because it is so apt to be forgotten. Alas! when this evil withers the bloom of life, when the gentle lisping of infancy, the tenderest accents of love, are no longer heard, the world becomes a desert,—and a desert peopled by deceitful forms and shadows, which flit around without accosting us! At a later period of life this partial death becomes a preparation for our real death. Through the universal silence which it produces the voice of God penetrates into the afflicted soul: “*I will bring her into the desert and speak comfortably to her.*”* Ah, may this

* Hosea, ii. 14.

indeed be so when the shades of death descend upon us!

Evils of a more painful nature may ensue; but none which will not be alleviated by a firm trust in God. All sufferings have been in a manner sanctified by those of Jesus Christ. A heavenly feeling, associating us with him who was "*a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief,*" inspires us with patience; what tender compassion for the unoffending weakness of human nature is expressed in the Gospel by the words, "*Jesus wept*" — "*Jesus was troubled*;" and how well did our Saviour understand this state of dejection when he cried out, "*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*" Where else can we find such a perfect acquaintance with affliction, and so much pity for the poor creatures who are subject to it? And what a blessing it is that a sanctifying virtue should attend the contemplation of the Saviour submitting to like sufferings with ourselves.

The entire resignation of ourselves to God for time and for eternity, the persuasion that He is our Father, and that He desires only the good of his children, the conviction that He sees and hears us, that He always listens to our supplications; — these reflections cannot fail to console and sustain us as long as our life remains in us. Inspired by such feelings, the

soul, already on the wing to leave this world, breathes out the prayer, — so soon to be granted — “ Oh, God, suffer me not, at my last hour, for any pains of 'death, to fall from Thee ” !*

* Burial Service for the Dead.

THE END.

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